



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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22 February 2026 – FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



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

World Youth Day 2027 Westminster Youth Ministry (WYM) will be taking 25 pilgrims to South Korea for World Youth Day 2027. From the 29 July to the 9 August the pilgrimage will visit shrines in Japan, before joining millions of young people from across the world in Seoul, culminating in a meeting, Vigil and Mass with Pope Leo XIV. The estimated cost currently is around £3,000 and includes flights, travel, accommodation and WYD registration. Aside from participation in the pilgrimage, pilgrims will also be asked to attend at least two sessions with WYM in preparation for the pilgrimage. These meetings will allow the formation of community and fellowship with other pilgrims. If you are interested in signing up please contact youth@rcdow.org.uk. The parish would be willing to assist a couple of young parishioners aged 18+ wanting to join the WYD pilgrimage with the costs involved. We would also support them in any fundraising activities they might choose to do to raise the remaining funds. Spaces are limited and we will need to be in touch with WYM sooner rather than later. If you are interested please let Fr Michael or Fr John know so that we can also be in touch with WYM and yourself.

2026 Lenten Appeal: 'Because we are formed in faith, we are sent in love'. The annual Lenten Appeal across the Diocese supports one shared mission: helping people encounter Christ and live that faith in love and service. Through Education, Youth & Evangelisation and Marriage & Family Life, the diocese helps to form hearts, nurture faith, and strengthen families within our parishes. Through Social Action, that formed faith reaches outward, ensuring that no one in our communities faces life's hardest moments alone. Your generous support this Lent will enable the Church to continue walking with people at every stage of life and be a visible sign of Christ's love, both within our parishes and among our neighbours. To donate today please visit www.rcdow.org.uk/LentenAppeal. Alternatively, envelopes are available in church. Thank you for your support and for helping our diocesan family to continue this vital work.

CAFOD Lent Family Fast Day Friday 27 February This Lent, live out the Gospel call to love your neighbour. By fasting and giving what you save, you join in Christ's compassion and can help another family put food on the table. Your donation will help families around the world grow food in difficult conditions – such as on flood-resistant floating gardens or using solar-powered water pumps in times of drought. Everyone is invited to join in this fast day through prayer, fasting and giving. If possible, try to only have one main meal and consider donating the money saved to those facing hunger because of droughts and floods. There will be a retiring collection next weekend with gift aid envelopes available this weekend. This year generous supporters have offered matched funding up to £378,000 so please be as generous as you can to help make sure that all this extra funding is used. Collect a CAFOD envelope to bless others with your support, donate online at www.cafod.org.uk/envelope or call 0303 303 3030. Text CAFODLENT to 70085 to donate £10. You can also donate at CAFOD Lent appeal 2026.

Fire Safety For the duration of the current works, if the number of people in church exceeds 230 we will need to utilise the main hall as an overflow. Furthermore, following additional advice from the Fire Safety Advisor, we would ask anyone with impaired mobility, or who would need assistance to evacuate the building and who is unaccompanied, to make themselves known to the welcomers or the priest and to sit in the area and benches nearest to the confessionals. We are also asking for volunteer Fire Marshals as we need more in order to run a rota and be absolutely certain of our having the required number at each mass. Volunteer Fire Marshals will only be required to do something in the unlikely event of a fire. There are instructions and there will be training. Please think seriously about volunteering in this way.

Offertory Promise Envelopes If you currently use planned giving envelopes to make your weekly offertory donation, please contact the parish office on 01727 853585 or by emailing stalban@rcdow.org.uk to let us know whether you would like us to order envelopes for the year from April 2026 for you.

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

Way of the Cross during Lent Every Saturday in Lent at 9.30am, before 10am Exposition, the Way of the Cross will be followed in Church with a different emphasis each week. On 28 February, the theme will be 'A Way of the Cross to Redemption. You can also view the Stations [online](#) and the text will be available to help you reflect on this journey through our Lord's passion and death.

Lent 2026 Course: 'The Creed' Thursday evenings 26 February, 5, 12, 19 and 26 March 7.30-9pm. On the 1700 anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, a film series which explores the Nicene Creed to reveal the intellectual and spiritual depths of Christian faith will be shown in the hall. Please come and understand our core Catholic doctrine, beyond just facts, to a personal, transformative belief. Refreshments available

Sacrament of Baptism The next baptism preparation course is Saturday 7 March 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: 22 March, 10 May, 14 June and 5 July.

OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

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.

Adult Faith Formation Group The AFF group exists to help parishioners develop a greater understanding of their faith, through which they come to know God better. AFF promotes this learning through events and talks, and we are actively seeking new members to broaden our experience and help develop new ways of learning. Ideally, every parishioner should be contributing to parish life on a regular basis, over and beyond regular mass attendance,

and many do. If you are looking for a way to support your community, and can spare one hour a month, then please contact either Melanie O'Neill or Dcn. Brendan, in person or via the parish office. Parishioners from St Bartholomew's are welcome also, as we strive to develop a greater closeness.

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. There is 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](#).

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.

Through Lent with St Matthew The London Jesuit Centre offers a daily prayer through Lent taken from the Gospel of St Matthew. Registration free. More details at www.londonjesuitcentre.org

Men's Breakfast Saturday 28 February 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 252309

Fair trade Our fair trade stall will be open after all Masses over the weekend of 28 Feb/1 March at the church and after Mass at Marshalswick Mass Centre on 8 March. Easter is very early this year so if you would like one of our Easter eggs with a special 24 page Easter story booklet, please try to get them at these opportunities.

CTSA Prison Forum #2 7:15pm for 7:30pm, Wednesday, 4 March, Christ Church, High Oaks AL3 6DJ. All welcome.

The Parish Friends Knit & Natter Group We will be meeting in the Parish Centre on 8 March 2.15-3.45pm. Please note change of time, All are welcome. Contact Helen Bassill 07860 830340.

St Albans Quakers Film Event 7.30pm Tuesday 10 March Friends Meeting House 7 Upper Lattimore Rd. AL1 3UD. Award winning film from Bereaved Families Forum – The Narrow Bridge . “This moving documentary shows 4 people, Palestinian and Israeli, who have been bereaved by the violence in Israel and Palestine and who have chosen to work for peace and reconciliation”. [Here](#) is the trailer for the film. Quakers are asking for donations to the film's costs and any extra will go to support the work of the [Bereaved Families Forum](#). Suggested donation is at least £5. Follow [this link](#) to get a ticket.

BINGO Many, many thanks for the support and superb attendance at our recent Bingo evening. The amount raised for Mary's Meals, including donations, came to £330.00. Our next Bingo evening will be at 8pm on Friday, 13 March.

Parish Friends Tea Party 22 March would like to invite you to a Tea Party they are holding on Sunday 22 March in the Parish Hall 2.30-4.30pm. We will be celebrating St Patrick's Day and also Des Coyle's 80th birthday. Damien and Peter Fahy will be entertaining us again with some great Irish songs. Any offers of homemade cakes would be greatly appreciated. We will be having a collection for Cafod instead of a raffle. We look forward to seeing you.

Westminster Diocese Justice & Peace Lecture 25 March The second annual Justice and Peace Lecture which will be given by Charles Wookey, formerly CEO of Blueprint for Business, and for the last three decades advisor on social and ethical issues to archbishops of Westminster and BCE&W. He will speak on the topic 'Living out Catholic Social Teaching in Today's Britain'. A response will be given by the young scholar, Dr Charlotte Bray of the University of Manchester. Farm Street Church of the Immaculate Conception, 114 Mount Street, London W1K 3AH, on 25 March at 7pm. Access to the church is from Farm Street or Mount Street. After the lecture all are invited to a buffet reception in the Arrupe Hall. Please email justiceandpeace@rcdow.org.uk by 1 March to attend.

Pilgrimage to Walsingham On the Feast of the Annunciation on Wednesday 25 March. Join us on a coach leaving from St Bartholomew's church at 7.45am. Holy Mass will be celebrated at 12 noon in the Basilica, followed by Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction.

We will walk or ride (if preferred) the Holy Mile and visit the site of the original Holy House and pray the Prayer for England. The cost is £27 for adults and it is free for children. Please contact Rosemary Roscoe 07723 546642 Rosemary.roscoe@gmail.com or Margaret Leahy margleahy@gmail.com 01727 763832 for further details.

Annual Mass of Thanksgiving for the Sacrament of Matrimony, Westminster Cathedral 2.30pm Saturday 23 May The Archbishop is inviting to this Mass all couples in the Diocese, who are celebrating their 5th 10th, 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th and 60th (and every year over 60) wedding anniversary of Catholic marriage in 2026. If you are celebrating an anniversary, please email the parish office by Friday 17 April with the following details: husband and wife's names, wedding date, full postal and email addresses (or telephone number, if no email).

Stop assisted suicide - further action needed Please take 30 seconds to stop assisted suicide from being forced into law. Right To Life UK has made an EasyAction tool to email your MP asking them to oppose attempts to force assisted suicide into law by bypassing the House of Lords. To ask your MP to oppose forcing the assisted suicide Bill into law, please visit the following website: www.righttolife.org.uk/ASCommons2026.

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 June 2026. Please also be aware that weekday morning masses (excluding Mondays) will be held at St Bartholomew's 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, is needed. Names will normally be included for eight weeks, unless the request 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.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 21 February – VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

5pm Mass Frank Donohue (RIP)

Sunday 22 February – FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

8am Mass Mary Watkins (RIP)

8.30am Mass Arthur & Catherine Ball (Ann)

(*St John Fisher School, Marshalswick*)

10am Mass Mario Di Filippo (Ann)

12 Noon Mass Domenico Sellechia (Ann)

6pm Mass Annette Campbell (RIP)

Reading 1, Genesis 2:7-9,3:1-7, Psalm 50(51)

Reading 2, Romans 5:12-19, Gospel, Matthew 4:1-11

Monday 23 February – Lent feria

10am Mass Johnnie Maloney (RIP)

Reading 1, Leviticus 19:1-2,11-18, Psalm 18(19)

Gospel, Matthew 25:31-46

Tuesday 24 February – Lent feria

10am Mass * Holy Souls

Reading 1, Isaiah 55:10-11, Psalm 33(34)

Gospel, Matthew 6:7-15

Wednesday 25 February – Lent feria

7am Mass Alice Lesley (RIP)

7pm Mass Roger Hagger (Ann)

Reading 1, Jonah 3:1-10, Psalm 50(51)

Gospel, Luke 11:29-32

Thursday 26 February – Lent feria

10am Mass * Francis Cafferkey (RIP)

Reading 1, Esther 4:17, Psalm 137(138)

Gospel, Matthew 7:7-12

Friday 27 February – Lent feria

7pm Mass Tommy McCarthy (RIP)

Reading 1, Ezekiel 18:21-28, Psalm 129(130)

Gospel, Matthew 5:20-26

On Fridays Mass is celebrated in St Albans Cathedral at Noon

Saturday 28 February – Lent feria

9.30am Way of the Cross

10am Confessions and Exposition only, no morning Mass

Saturday 28 February – VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

5pm Mass Michael John Theanne (Ann)

Sunday 1 March – SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

8am Mass Anne Smet (RIP)

8.30am Mass Patricia McCarthy (Ann)

(*St John Fisher School, Marshalswick*)

10am Mass Francis Cafferty (RIP)

12 Noon Mass Peter Celestine Okoro (Ann)

6pm Mass Anne Smet (RIP)

Reading 1, Genesis 12:1-4, Psalm 32(33)

Reading 2, 2 Timothy 1:8-10, Gospel, Matthew 17:1-9

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

PLEASE PRAY

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

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 Maria Johanna Rann-Jakobs.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Arthur & Catherine Ball, John Baxter, Mario Di Filippo, Roger Hagger, Elizabeth Harding, Angela Kent, Patricia McCarthy, Peter Celestine Okoro, Domenico Sellechia and Michael John Theanne.

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](#) for details of mass times and events or to read a copy of the St Bartholomew's weekly newsletter.

Pope's prayer of the month Each year, the Holy Father asks for our prayers for a specific intention each month. In February, let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.

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 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.

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.