



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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1 March 2026 - SECOND 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 / stalbenssg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059

We are a Fairtrade parish

Fr John writes... The Rite of Election

Last Saturday I was blessed to go to Westminster Cathedral with a number of our catechumens, (those seeking Baptism at Easter) and candidates, (those seeking full communion with the Catholic Church at Easter). Accompanied by sponsors we were blessed to visit the crypt under the main altar where the first two Archbishops of Westminster are buried: Cardinal Wiseman and Cardinal Manning. Saturday was the first occasion on which our new Archbishop Richard Moth led the Rite of Election and, in his homily, he reminded the catechumens and candidates that Saturday was not "simply an administrative step, but a decisive spiritual moment". Addressing the catechumens, whose names are now inscribed in the Book of the Elect, he described the gathering of those names in the Cathedral as "a powerful sign of the journey you have been taking – a journey that will reach its high point in the new life of Baptism." He commented that their presence in the Cathedral was "a sign of your response to God's call...and an example to us all."

The catechumens and candidates, with catechists, were greeted by the Archbishop or Auxiliary Bishop, as a sign of being welcomed into the Church. What was noticeable were the smiles on their faces as they walked back to their seats. It is also noticeable this year that, based on numbers over the last few years, many more men and women are seeking baptism in the Catholic Church, which is to be welcomed. This is true of the parishes of St Alban & St Stephen and St Bartholomew as we have six adults and one child preparing for Baptism. Both St Alban & St Stephen and St Bartholomew have also seen a rise in those already baptised wishing to be received into the Catholic Church with six adults being prepared. We are also blessed that three adult Catholics will receive Confirmation at the Easter Vigil.

Our parishes are thriving, but we must not become complacent. We need to keep all those preparing in our prayers and, as missionary disciples, encourage others who may be hesitant about the Church to come forward and explore the Catholic faith. Please remember our catechumens and candidates as they move into a deeper encounter with Christ and the Church. The Rite of Election marks the beginning of a period of continued preparation until Easter, when the Elect and candidates will receive the Sacraments of Initiation in their parishes.

Easter Garden of Remembrance In this year's Easter Garden, you are invited once again to remember your deceased family and friends. Their names will be written on paper flower shapes and then displayed at the back of church. Please give the names of your loved ones to the parish office, either by email or as a written list, clearly marked Easter Garden.

CAFOD Lent Family Fast Day There will be a retiring collection this weekend with gift aid envelopes available. 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.

Letter from the Archbishop Please follow [this link](#) to read a letter from the newly installed Archbishop of Westminster, Archbishop Richard Moth. Copies are also available in the parish centre.

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.

SACRAMENTAL & LITURGICAL

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. On 7 March, the Stations are based on Pope Francis Urbi et Orbi and will be led by Parish Friends. 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 5, 12, 19 and 26 March 7.30-9pm in the Parish Centre. 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. 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.. 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.

CAFOD soup and film event Many thanks to everyone who supported this Lent fast day event. We enjoyed a simple lunch of bread and soup and watched the Penguin Lessons. Donations came to a magnificent £520.

Migrants' toiletries and clothing collections On the third Sunday of each month. 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.

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](#).

SVP Request for help The parish SVP group is currently supporting a family who are in need of a bunk bed suitable for children. If you have one that is spare/no longer needed and would like to help with this, please could you contact us by emailing Charlotte at PresidentA221613@svp.org.uk. Many thanks.

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. It would be lovely to have more volunteers to help serve the teas and coffees. Anyone interested can leave contact details with the parish office.

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.

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

C.W.L. Meeting 2pm Thursday 5 March Join us for tea and chat. There will be no meeting in April but we look forward to a meeting in May for a talk on Plants and their use in medicine. We are a very friendly group of ladies who are keen to invite others to our meetings.

Fair trade Our fair trade stall will be open after Mass at Marshalswick Mass Centre on 8 March, including Easter eggs with a special 24 page Easter story booklet.

World Day of Prayer World Day of Prayer falls on Friday 6 March. It is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. This year it will be led by Nigerian women and will reflect on Matthew 11:28-30 and the carrying of heavy burdens. Please see this [link](#) for details.

The Parish Friends Knit & Natter Group We will be meeting in the Parish Centre on 10 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'. [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. Tickets via [this link](#).

BINGO 8pm Friday 13 March In the Parish Hall in aid of "Open Door" Admission is 50p and includes refreshments. Everyone is most welcome.

Lenten Concert at Westminster Cathedral 6.45pm Wednesday 18 March Our Cathedral Choir and the Britten Sinfonia will perform a concert of reflection on the ancient Marian hymn, contemplating the sorrow of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the foot of the Cross: MacMillan's *Stabat Mater*, and Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*. We would like to offer you and your parishioners an opportunity to buy your tickets at a discount of 50%. Discounted tickets are available in Sections A, B and N at this [link](#), using the password: WCSBDO. The performance will begin with Sir James MacMillan in conversation with Fr Patrick van der Vorst, our Precentor, and Founder of [Christian Art](#).

Parish Friends Tea Party 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.

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: Rosemary.roscoe@gmail.com, 07723 546642 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).

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. Or speak to Fr Michael or Fr John. 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.

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.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

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

Monday 2 March – Lent feria

10am Mass Ray Hill (RIP)

Reading 1, Daniel 9:4-10, Psalm 78(79)

Gospel, Luke 6:36-38

Tuesday 3 March – Lent feria

10am Mass * Margaret de Cruz (Ints)

Reading 1, Isaiah 1:10,16-20, Psalm 49(50)

Gospel, Matthew 23:1-12

Wednesday 4 March – Lent feria

10.30am * *Confessions, Exposition and Benediction at St Barts*

7am Mass Andy Maguire (RIP)

7pm Mass Lucy Partington (RIP)

Reading 1, Jeremiah 18:18-20, Psalm 30(31)

Gospel, Matthew 20:17-28

Thursday 5 March – Lent feria

10am Mass * Evelio Azcona (RIP)

Reading 1, Jeremiah 17:5-10, Psalm 1

Gospel, Luke 16:19-31

Friday 6 March – Lent feria

7pm Mass Stephen Quinn (RIP)

Reading 1, Genesis 37:3-4,12-13,17-28, Psalm 104(105)

Gospel, Matthew 21:33-43,45-46

On Fridays Mass is celebrated in St Albans Cathedral at Noon

Saturday 7 March – Lent feria

9.30am Way of the Cross

10am Confessions and Exposition only, no morning Mass

Saturday 7 March – VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

5pm Mass Kathleen Kilcoyne (RIP)

Sunday 8 March – THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

8am Mass Carys Newton (Ann)

8.30am Mass Oswald McCarthy (Ann)

(*St John Fisher School, Marshalswick*)

10am Mass People of the parish

12 Noon Mass Jean Yves Theanne (Ann)

6pm Mass Joyce Moran (Ann)

Reading 1, Exodus 17:3-7, Psalm 94(95)

Reading 2, Romans 5:1-2,5-8, Gospel, John 4:5-42

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

PLEASE PRAY

United with Churches together in St Albans this week we celebrate the World Day of Prayer 2026 which will be observed on Friday, 6 March, with a theme prepared by women of Nigeria focusing on finding rest in God amid life's burdens.

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 and Ann-Maria Whitehead.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including John Baxter, Elizabeth Harding, Angela Kent, Oswald McCarthy, Patricia McCarthy, Joyce Moran, Carys Newton, Peter Celestine Okoro, Jean Yves Theanne 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 For March 2026, Pope Leo XIV's prayer intention focuses on disarmament and peace, urging nations to pursue dialogue and diplomacy over violence, particularly regarding nuclear weapons. The intention calls for prayers that world leaders choose the path of peace.

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.