



Church Website

## NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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15 March 2026 – FOURTH 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](mailto:stalbenssg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk) / 07976 277059

*We are a Fairtrade parish*

*Fr Michael writes...* We are approaching Holy Week and the busiest week in the Church's calendar. The building works, have reduced the church capacity, so this Holy Week comes with the added challenge of managing the numbers of people in church. I am confident that we will be able to accommodate the numbers who will attend on Maundy Thursday and for the Vigil on Holy Saturday. The real challenge will be Good Friday and the Service at 3pm. This is usually full to capacity and draws in visitors and a number of people who do not regularly attend. These will not be aware of our current works or the appeal we made last weekend for people to consider attending the Stations of the Cross at 12 Noon and the additional service at 5.30pm. I do not want to ticket the 3pm Service on Good Friday but I would ask parishioners to consider attending the 12 Noon Stations and 5.30pm Service on Good Friday. During Holy Week, for each of the main services, we will establish an overflow upstairs in the main hall.

**Music for the Triduum** As with last Holy Week, the music this coming Holy Week will be a combined effort drawing on the musicians and singers from across the various music groups from the different Sunday Masses. There will be rehearsals at 6.30pm on Maundy Thursday (2 April), 12 Noon on Good Friday (3 April) beginning in the Hall, and 5pm on Holy Saturday (4 April).

**Foot Washing** If you would be willing to have your foot washed at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Maundy Thursday evening please email the parish office. You would need to be present in church for 7.45pm on Thursday 2 April.

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**Fire Safety** During the current works, if the people in church exceed 230 we will need to utilise the hall as an overflow. Also, following advice from the Fire Safety Advisor, we would ask anyone 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 more volunteer Fire Marshals to ensure we have 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 seriously consider volunteering. In addition to a fire marshal rota for weekend masses, we are putting together a fire marshal rota for Holy Week and Easter. **If you can help as a fire marshal at any of the Holy Week or Easter services, please sign up using the sign-up sheets in the Parish Centre or by contacting the parish office.**

**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. To donate today please visit [www.rcdow.org.uk/LentenAppeal](http://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.

**Planned Giving Envelopes for 2026/27** These are now available to collect from the parish office.

**Gift Aid for 2025-26** The current tax year ends on 5 April 2026 and we will be submitting the parish gift aid claim in the weeks following that date. 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 aid (25p for every pound donated). 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. If you do pay tax and are therefore able to gift aid donations you make to the parish, but have not completed a gift aid form, please contact the parish office if you would like to become a gift aider.

**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** Each Saturday in Lent at 9.30am, before 10am Exposition, the Way of the Cross will be followed in Church. On 21 March the Stations will be led by the Adult Faith Formation Group. 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.

**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.

**Sacrament of Baptism** The next baptism preparation course is Saturday 9 May 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 are actively seeking new members to broaden our experience and help develop new ways of learning. If you 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.

**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](#).

**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.

## 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](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.

**Lent 2026 Course: 'The Creed'** The course continues on Thursday 19 and 26 March 7.30-9pm in the Parish Centre. On the 1700<sup>th</sup> 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. All are welcome.

**Seeds of Hope Evangelisation Day 11am - 4pm Saturday 21 March** At Our Lady and St Vincent, Potters Bar. Join Catholics from across the diocese for inspiring workshops, talks, prayer, and reflection to grow in confidence in sharing Christ. To book, please see [here](#).

**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.

**End of Life Care: Science and Technology at the Service of Humankind - 5pm to 7.10pm Monday 23 March** Free event for 14+ at Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School, Colney Heath Ln, St Albans AL4 0TT. Free parking on site. Guest speakers, Baroness Julie Smith of Newnham and Prof David Albert Jones (St Mary's Twickenham), will reflect on the challenges that affect the way we all think about medicine and the development of biomedical technologies, the significance of the care of the sick, the complexities of healthcare delivery, ethical and legal boundaries, and our social responsibility toward the most vulnerable. This event will feature discussions around the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill. Drinks and nibbles will be served and followed by a roundtable activity and a Q&A. Link to register [here](#). If you have any questions, please [email](#) the project co-director Miss Gallego.

**The Parish Friends Knit & Natter Group** We will be meeting in the Parish Centre on 24 March 2.15-3.45pm. Please note change of time, All are welcome. Contact Helen Bassill 07860 830340.

**Pilgrimage to Walsingham - Places still available** On the Feast of the Annunciation on Wednesday 25 March. 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. £27 for adults and free for children. Please contact Rosemary Roscoe: 07723 546642, [Rosemary.roscoe@gmail.com](mailto:Rosemary.roscoe@gmail.com), or Margaret Leahy: [margleahy@gmail.com](mailto:margleahy@gmail.com), 01727 763832.

**Circle of Friends March 2026 Invitation** The March Circle of Friends tea will be in the St Barts Parish Hall on Wednesday 25 March 2-4pm. If you are living alone or would like to join for a tea and a chat you are welcome to attend. The tea gives an opportunity to meet with others and an activity will be included. There is no charge for the tea but a small donation is appreciated. Please let Maureen Kelly know if you will be attending or are in need of a lift: [stars2004@btinternet.com](mailto:stars2004@btinternet.com) /07860 283743.

**Fair trade** The parish fair trade stall will be open after all Masses at church over the weekend of 28/29 March and after Mass at Marshalswick Mass centre on 12 April. Please try to take a moment to look at the wide range of items available and see if there is something you could buy to support people in the developing world.

**Craft Activities and Prayer in Local Care Homes** To commemorate the 800th anniversary of St Francis's death in 1226, our two parishes have been asked to lead four sessions in local care homes celebrating Creation - nature

wildlife and the seasons. These interactive sessions will include a craft activity, a short Scripture reading and prayer. Please would you spare a couple of hours to help with planning and /or to assist a resident with simple artwork? Please speak to Sara Nash or contact the parish office for more information.

**Divine Mercy Service 2-4pm Sunday 12 April** At Holy Family Church, 194 Knightsfield, Welwyn Garden City AL8 7RQ. (Rosary, Hour of Divine Mercy, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Confessions, Veneration of Divine Mercy Image).

**Tool and Equipment Collection for Young People in Africa** This includes tools for carpentry, dressmaking, gardening etc and is being organised by Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, to take place at Lourdes Hall, Southdown Road, Harpenden AL5 1PD 2-4.30pm on Sunday 19 April. Further details [here](#) or by contacting 07905 797729 or [Elizabeth.hines@gmail.com](mailto:Elizabeth.hines@gmail.com).

**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).

## 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 July 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.

**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.

## MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

### **Saturday 14 March - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY**

5pm Mass Connie Clancy (RIP)

### **Sunday 15 March - FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT**

8am Mass Anne Smet (RIP)

8.30am Mass Ray Hill (RIP)

(*St John Fisher School, Marshalswick*)

10am Mass People of the parish

12 Noon Mass Mary Watkins (RIP)

6pm Mass Frances Boak (RIP)

Reading 1, 1 Samuel 16:1,6-7,10-13, Psalm 22(23)

Reading 2, Ephesians 5:8-14, Gospel, John 9:1-41

### **Monday 16 March - Lent feria**

10am Mass Edward Sumner (Ann)

Reading 1, Isaiah 65:17-21, Psalm 29(30)

Gospel, John 4:43-54

### **Tuesday 17 March - ST PATRICK**

10am Mass \* John Robinson (RIP)

Reading 1, Jeremiah 1:4-9, Psalm 116(117)

Reading 2, Acts 13:46-49, Gospel, Luke 10:1-12,17-20

### **Wednesday 18 March - Lent feria**

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

7am Mass Dennis Murphy (RIP)

7pm Mass Emily D'Souza (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 49:8-15, Psalm 144(145)

Gospel, John 5:17-30

### **Thursday 19 March - ST JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE**

**BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, Patron of the Diocese**

10am Mass \* Les Leach (RIP)

Reading 1, 2 Samuel 7:4-5,12-16, Psalm 88(89), Reading 2,

Roman 4:13,16-18,22, Gospel, Matthew 1:16,18-21,24

### **Friday 20 March - Lent feria**

7pm Mass Jeanette Shields (RIP)

Reading 1, Wisdom 2:1,12-22, Psalm 33(34)

Gospel, John 7:1-2,10,25-30

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

### **Saturday 21 March - Lent feria**

9.30am Way of the Cross

*10am Confessions and Exposition only, no morning Mass*

### **Saturday 21 March - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY**

5pm Mass Pat Roache (Ann)

### **Sunday 22 March - FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT**

8am Mass Colin Fennessy (RIP)

8.30am Mass Milly Yarwood (Ann) (*St John Fisher School*)

10am Mass Floryse Chan-Fat (Ann)

12 Noon Mass Mary Curran (Ann)

6pm Mass John Robinson (RIP)

Reading 1, Ezekiel 37:12-14, Psalm 129(130)

Reading 2, Romans 8:8-11, Gospel, John 11:1-45

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

## PLEASE PRAY

United with Churches together in St Albans this week we pray for all members of Marshalswick Baptist Free 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 Manuela Hernandez and Roger Johnson.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Mary Baxter, Floryse Chan-Fat, Mary Curran, Alberto Domingos, Fr Sandy Murray MSC, Pat Roache, Edward Sumner and Milly Yarwood

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

### **Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Group Prayer**

Let us pray for nations to move towards effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and for world leaders to choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.

**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](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.