



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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8 March 2026 - THIRD 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 Michael writes... In this Sunday's Gospel Christ engages with the Samaritan woman at the well. In sitting with her and talking to her, Christ, who knows her through and through, who astounded her, no doubt, by his knowledge of her life, breaks with one convention after another. But Jesus doesn't stop at telling her all about her past life, he tells her all that will be necessary for the future; that it isn't water that will quench her thirst or put everything right, but that it is him, the fountain of eternal life, who will do this.

Reflecting on the Gospel I ask myself, what would I do if I encountered Jesus at the well. Would I let him set the agenda, or would I tell him what I need, how it is, and what needs to be done.

You see the Christ we encounter at the well - at the waters of baptism - is a Christ who wishes to transform. In the Gospel Christ finds himself at the well without a bucket. He leaves aside the earthly and the practical. It is the disciples who have gone off to do the shopping, who seek to sustain life as it was and is. Christ wants to change things.

Any transformation, any recognition that a change and reordering of priorities is needed, is a scary prospect. Yet, in the same way that Christ can be found waiting for the woman at the well, he waits for us - ready to strike up the conversation, to tell us what we need to know, to set us free. Christ invited the woman at the well to a new kind of seeing and living. In his suffering and death he promises to keep company with us in our suffering and isolation, just as he kept company with the solitary woman at the well. In our lives may we hear anew the call to repentance, to that change of heart, and the hope of eternal life which we will celebrate at the end of our Lenten journey.

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.

Lent 2026 Course: 'The Creed' Thursday 12, 19 and 26 March 7.30-9pm in the Parish Centre. On the 1700th 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 to come along.

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.**

CAFOD Lent Family Fast Day Retiring Collection Thank you for your generous support this Family Fast Day - £891.82 was collected for CAFOD. Find out how your donations are helping to build a better world [here](https://www.cafod.org.uk/envelope). PS It's not too late to donate - visit www.cafod.org.uk/envelope.

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. Alternatively, envelopes are available in church. Thank you for your support and for helping our diocesan family to continue this vital work.

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 14 March the Stations are based on Mary's Way of the Cross. 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.

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 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.

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 email Charlotte at PresidentA221613@svp.org.uk. Many thanks.

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](#).

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.

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

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.

Mercy Associates Meeting We are holding our next meeting on Tuesday 10 March at 10.30am in room 1 of the Parish centre. Sr Maura will be joining us.

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'. 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*. Half-price tickets are available 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 the 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.

Circle of Friends March 2026 Invitation The March Circle of Friends tea will be in the 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 /07860 283743.

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, Harpenden to take place at Lourdes Hall, Southdown Road, Harpenden AL5 1 PD on Sunday 19 April 12-4.30pm. Further details, including help with collection if required, [here](#) or by contacting 07905 797729 or Elizabeth.hines@gmail.com.

Craft Activities and Prayer in Local Care Homes To commemorate the 800th anniversary of St Francis' 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.

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 29 July to 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 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

Monday 9 March – Lent feria

10am Mass Jeanette Shields (RIP)

Reading 1, 2 Kings 5:1-15, Psalm 41(42)

Gospel, Luke 4:24-30

Tuesday 10 March – Lent feria

10am Mass * Pauline Haynes (RIP)

Reading 1, Daniel 3:25,34-43, Psalm 24(25)

Gospel, Matthew 18:21-35

Wednesday 11 March – Lent feria

10.30am * Confessions, Exposition and Benediction at St Barts

7am Mass Maria Galliker (RIP)

7pm Mass Holy Souls

Reading 1, Deuteronomy 4:1,5-9, Psalm 147

Gospel, Matthew 5:17-19

Thursday 12 March – Lent feria

10am Mass * Holy Souls

Reading 1, Jeremiah 7:23-28, Psalm 94(95)

Gospel, Luke 11:14-23

Friday 13 March – Lent feria

7pm Mass Francesco Ciaccio (Ann)

Reading 1, Hosea 14:1-9, Psalm 80(81)

Gospel, Mark 12:28-34

On Fridays Mass is celebrated in St Albans Cathedral at Noon

Saturday 14 March – Lent feria

9.30am Way of the Cross

10am Confessions and Exposition only, no morning Mass

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

* 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 Hatfield Road Methodist 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, Maria Johanna Rann-Jakobs and Ann-Maria Whitehead.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Francesco Ciaccio, Oswald McCarthy, Joyce Moran, Fr Sandy Murray MSC, Carys Newton, Jean Yves 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.

Cot wanted for local family Wanted: a cot for a 1+ year old child. If you can help with this, please call Mary on 07976 277 059.

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 cantonmassesesa@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.