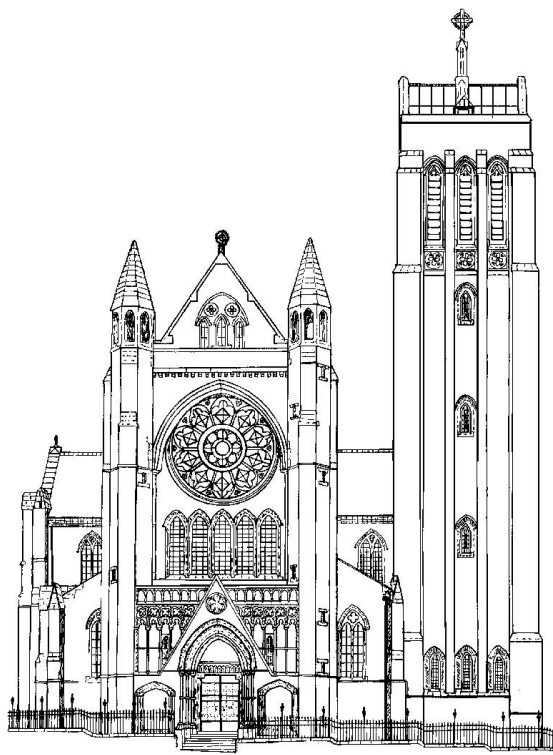




The Church of
St Alban the Martyr
Birmingham 12



St ALBAN AND St PATRICK PARISH MAGAZINE



Maryellen Fellows

April
2026
£1





Church of S Alban the Martyr
Conybere Street, Birmingham
(Traditional Anglo-Catholic)
(www.saintalban.co.uk)

Vicar:

Fr Jacob Pallett 07510 270381
St Alban's Vicarage, 120 Stanhope Street,
Birmingham B12 0XB frjacobpallett@gmail.com

Sunday Services

Solemn Choral Mass 10.00 a.m.
Evening Choral Service 6.00 p.m.
(Usually the fourth Sunday of the month — see the Music List)

Mission Wednesday

Mass at 10.00 a.m.: Followed by Open Church 'tea and toast' in St Patrick's Room
Rosary at 6.00 p.m.: This is the time of Shrine Prayers at Walsingham,
Join in from home or at St Alban the Martyr

Confessions: By appointment

Authorized Eucharistic Ministers *(Bishop's Permission)*

Mrs Verna Smith-Broadbent

Mrs Amanda Cadman

Dr Christopher Smith

☎: 0121 624 3865

☎: 0121 471 1301

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From The Vicarage...

Spring has arrived and, by the time you are reading this, the clocks will have changed and we will be in summertime!

Looking back to the Lent that has now passed, we have continued to use the church during the week as a place of prayer and devotion. With Mission Assistant Anna, we have been able to pray the Rosary together. We concentrated on the Sorrowful Mysteries, meditating on passages from each of the Gospels, and on the Feast of the Annunciation, we were able to pray the Joyful Mysteries.

The Stations of the Cross around the church have also been well-trodden. It is good that these devotional objects are used for their primary purpose: leading us closer to the mystery of God's love. On Sundays during Lent, we were also able to pray the office of Compline with Benediction, which has not happened here for a number of years. I do hope that we can continue to be a place that nurtures the devotional life of the church as we are led into the mystery of salvation by Christ.

The Patronal Festival for Saint Patrick was a very enjoyable occasion, and we are grateful to Fr Andrew for celebrating with us. We are equally grateful to those who prepared the parish lunch, where we were able to offer hospitality to our guests. Our very own Dr Andrew Harvey presented a fine lecture on the Pollock Brothers; you will find a copy of Fr Tom Pollock's poem produced for this issue of the magazine (page 4). On the same day, we began the 2026 organ concert series with organist Andrew Scott.

Once again, we welcomed the children from Chandos Primary School, along with many of their parents, for their Easter service. It was wonderful to host them. There was a fantastic display of Easter bonnets and a small pageant where they showed their handiwork to their families. Many long-term residents told me they had never been inside the building before, so we are very grateful to the school for providing this opportunity to welcome people into their parish church.

The beginning of April will see us immersed in the drama of Holy Week. These are the holiest days in the liturgical kalendar for prayer and for entering into the story of salvation in "real time." I hope that Easter will be a joyful time for us all.

In terms of temporalities, the APCM is again on Low Sunday at 12 noon after the Sung Mass. This is an opportunity to look back over the previous year and give thanks for all that has happened. Having an APCM so close to Easter has required a very quick turnaround of documents and accounts. I am mindful that an interregnum is never an easy time for a parish, and I am sure each member of the community is grateful to one another for the work that goes into keeping the church open and active.

The Christian way of life places a unique demand on us. There is much in the world outside of our control, but we can be people who pray for peace and proclaim the mystery of resurrection life.

May you have a blessed and joyful Easter.

Fr Jacob

A Sermon: St Patrick's Day Patronal, 2026

Today is a Happy Day in Lent!

You may have heard the festivities around Highgate recently, as the Irish community celebrated the life of St Patrick. But he is also a patron of our own parish, and so today we rejoice with a saint of God with whom we seek to join our prayers on a daily basis.

I'm sure most of you know that the health centre nearby used to be a primary school dedicated to him — so his name still lives on beyond the dedication of the church hall.

According to history, Patrick was a young lad when he was kidnapped from his home in Roman Britain by pirates and sold into slavery in Ireland. During those lonely years as a shepherd, he turned to God in prayer, finding the strength to eventually escape and return home.

Patrick, however, received a vision from God calling him to go back to Ireland — not for revenge, but to share a message of kindness and mercy. It must have taken extraordinary grit and courage to return to the same people who once held him captive, and the land from which he had escaped. At a time of much conflict, he showed people a better way to live through the power of God's love. He founded communities built on prayer, with a compassionate purpose of people looking out for one another.

Saint Patrick can be considered one of the great missionaries of the Christian faith as it established itself in these lands and in Ireland. Although Saint Patrick struggled with his learning — being abducted has a negative effect on one's education — he was also aware of the power of the Gospel message to transform people's lives.

His own Confession records how he baptised thousands of people. There is something extraordinary in the way that Saint

Patrick refused to see people as outsiders or enemies, but rather as those needing to know the power of the Gospel. A man who was once a slave and a shepherd became an apostle of the faith and baptised those who once would have held him captive.

As he challenged the pagan religion of his day — those false gods, futile ways, and false narratives that people were caught up in — he saw the transforming nature of the faith of the church bringing people into relationship with Christ; a relationship in which people would come to know themselves as sons and daughters of the living God.

The Gospel for today takes us to that moment where Jesus is thinking about the missionary work of the disciples. Jesus reminds them that mission is the essential way in which the church finds nourishment. If only the disciples would lift their eyes, they would see that the fields are already ripe for harvesting. It is very easy to see obstacles and reasons why something can never be done, but that wasn't the perspective of the missionaries, and it certainly wasn't the perspective of Jesus.

It's easy to see why our Anglo-Catholic forefathers took inspiration from Saint Patrick. You do need an extraordinary amount of grit and courage to do mission in this world. It takes a lot to see that the harvest is there when the problems of the world — the noise of the city, the distractions of social media, false idols, and the futile ways of society — all get in the way.

We are blessed that people like Saint Patrick have gone before us, have laid the foundations of the church, and have already shown us that the message of the Gospel can challenge and transform people's lives for the better, bringing them into a relationship of faith in Christ.

It takes a lot of grit and determination to be an Anglo-Catholic in the church today.

Too often our tradition is seen as something more fitting to the Black Country Living Museum — some sort of antiquarian nostalgia. But tradition is more like a living stream, a flowing river; it is something that moves and changes and evolves, the source of which is the gift of faith. People are exploring and seeking and searching for answers to questions about their own personhood and purpose. And the life of faith leads us to the heart of that answer: to the mystery of God in the person of Jesus Christ, the child of Mary.

We are all, by our faith, ‘missioners’— which is why this way of life demands grit and determination. We have all entered into the work of the Master who calls us to make known the gospel to our generation. We are not here for ourselves; we are here to worship God, and we are here for the next person who walks into this place wanting to know about the life of faith.

Our tradition isn't a museum piece; it is a living faith that enriches and informs every

aspect of our life. It is nothing less than the Gospel way of life that turns us into people of prayer; that calls us to acts of generous service; it teaches us to be reliant upon God's grace; it demands us to be discerning and obedient to the working of love; it enables us to share in the life of the kingdom; it challenges the scandals and injustices of this world; and it prepares us for eternal life where we can be numbered among the saints.

There is a real irony in the fact that the church of Saint Patrick no longer stands. The bricks and mortar might not be there, but the life of Anglo-Catholic faith has not gone anywhere from this parish. This is the same faith which was shared by the apostle, and it is the same faith that is sustained by the sacrament that we will now share together.

As we come to receive that precious gift of Christ Jesus in bread and wine, let us remember the power of the glorious Gospel of Christ Jesus — and let us seek graceful grit and determination to live the life of faith in our own generation, as Saint Patrick did in his.

Fr Jacob

This Palm Sunday sermon by Thomas Pollock was printed posthumously in The Gospeller for April 1897— Fr Tom had died in December 1896. It is reproduced here with the original punctuation — today we do not usually hyphenate ‘to-day’ or add a space before a semicolon!

Towards Jerusalem.

By the Rev. T. B. Pollock

It is the Holy Week, and we tread on Holy Ground. To-day, indeed, our voices are raised in songs that have a sound of triumph in them. We seem to celebrate a victory. The palms tell of glory and power won by hard fight. But He, Whose praise we sing, by His burst of grief as He gazes on Jerusalem, reminds us that all is not yet peace and gladness, and warns us to think and feel with Him. Our Hosanna, “Save now,” is indeed

a cry of faith in Him as a sure hope ; but we know, as the people did not in that first age of the world, how He is to be our Saviour, and what the salvation must cost. He sees the joy set before Him ; He knows that already is the Son of Man glorified—the training of His life having prepared Him for the last struggle in which He must prevail. But He knows what that struggle will be : the fiery baptism of outward pain is felt

even now with its fierce burning ; the cup of inward spiritual anguish is measured in all its fulness, and tasted in all its bitterness before it is put to His lips.

At Gethsemane we read that our Lord began to be sorrowful and very heavy, as if no grief had been felt till then, and no weight had crushed upon His strength. So much was added when this crisis came that all before seemed nothing. Then, within and without, through His whole nature, the Man Christ Jesus felt what made Him exceeding sorrowful even unto death. Who can try to think of the strain upon Him while He held up, and was upheld in that hour of dreadful misery? He brings the chosen three with Him. He feels as man the longing for the nearness of those whom He trusts as friends. It is a comfort to Him that, so far as they can, they think and feel as He does. Yet He is withdrawn from them ; He is, indeed, alone. No heart, however true, can share his load. No hand can aid Him in the battle which He must fight by Himself. We never read of His praying with his Disciples. He prayed for them. He taught them how to pray ; but He never could be side by side with them in drawing near to His Father. No words could be used in common with Him and them. He spoke of My Father and your Father ; never of One to Whom they stood in the same

relation. So now the prayer, which goes up with strong crying, is one which His disciples can hear, but in which they cannot join, for they do not know His meaning. His flesh is weak, for it is pressed against by a force such as no human nature but His was ever called to bear. It felt with a keenness which no other ever knew. For He was thoughtful and He was tender in feeling as no other could be. The spirit was willing, for He was now reaching the end of that work for which He came into the world. He was straitened till that work was accomplished. In His weakness He laid before the love of His Father His sinless shrinking from pain and shame. In the strength of His great resolve, He held fast to the Will of God, praying that at all cost to Himself that Will might be fully done.

There was no mere passive yielding. The whole force of thought and will were at work. He was alive to all the issues at stake, to all the dangers that threatened Him, He watched Himself. He saw His foes and all that was coming, He watched for each sign of the Divine Will, and each help that the ministering Angels brough Him. He prayed—breathing out His firm trust and hope in Him Who was able to save Him from death, and fixing firmly the direction of His will that it might be wholly one with God's.

S. Alban's, Birmingham, Palm Sunday, 1887.

MY FRIENDS IN PARADISE.

Friends of my childhood, guardians of my youth,
Who made my morn of life so bright and fair;
In whom I saw the loveliness of Truth—

And learned to love it, loving what ye were,—
In you the forming of a heavenly hand,

The work of GOD'S own SPIRIT I could see,
Preparing you for that pure, peaceful land,

Where you were going—ah, too soon for me!
What can the joy of early days restore?

Earth ne'er can be again what earth has been,
You made life what it was to me before,

And dearness gave to each familiar scene.

And you are gone—I miss you day by day,

I look around, and for your comfort yearn;

But onward I must tread my lonely way,

For you shall never, never more return.

Your looks of love that used my heart to cheer,

Shall never beam again from mortal eyes;

Your voices speak not now to mourners here,

But sing with happy saints beyond the skies.

Your fight is o'er, your work is done below,

Safe in the waiting land you calmly rest;

Still learning ever more and more to know
 With joy how deep GOD'S chosen ones are blest.
 You cannot come to me, nor could I dare
 To wish you back in this dark world of pain;
 But I may go to Paradise, and there,
 In brighter scenes enjoy your love again.
 A little more of waiting must be mine,
 More work for GOD to try my faith and love;
 That we may meet where you already shine,
 And live together in the homes above.
 But—have I only thoughts of vanished days,
 And hopes of meeting in the realms afar?
 Must I my yearning spirit never raise
 To think upon and love you where you are?
 The memory of love will not avail
 The craving of the soul to satisfy;
 Love must love on, though sight and knowledge fail,
 And Faith must quicken it, or Love will die.
 I did not feel, though sorrow bowed my head,
 As each dear form was laid with kindred clay,
 That out of sight I buried then my dead,
 That heart and thought must turn from you away.
 It cannot be; my thoughts, with restless wing,
 Far, far from earth to follow you will roam;
 My heart will still its truest offering bring
 As when I loved you in my childhood's home.
 Though other friends are dear, they yet are new,
 And never can be precious as the old;
 The love that clings so tenderly to you,
 Will not be loosened others to enfold.
 And as I feel with all the joys of those,
 Who still can greet me with a friendly hand;
 I surely may desire the full repose

Of dearer friends who tread the spirit land.
 Need I drive back the instinct of my heart
 This impulse true, that nature makes me feel?
 Fire from its light and warmth I may not part,
 I cannot love you, and not wish your weal.
 If GOD can give you more of GOD'S own light,
 And draw you nearer to the fount of joy;
 I must desire that you may reach the height,
 Where purest rapture may your songs employ.
 But though my lips have uttered not a word,
 Has not my soul looked up to GOD in prayer?
 He knows the love by which my heart is stirred
 Each longing unexpressed that rises there.
 Yes, I have prayed, although I never knew
 What meaning in my silent yearnings dwelt;
 And GOD has listened to the prayers for you
 That rose unbidden from the love I felt.
 And am I told that, when I bow the knee,
 And tell my wants to Him who reigns above,
 I may remember many dear to me,
 But must forget the friends whom most I love?
 Ah, never! — GOD is kinder far than man,
 He nowhere tells me of the heartless creed
 Of those who threaten me with fiercest ban,
 If I should venture for your souls to plead.
 I ask not what you need—I ask not how
 You may be blessed in answer to my cry—
 I only know you are imperfect now,
 Though nearer to your full reward than I:
 And He in whom alone we all do live—
 You in your rest, and I who toil below,—
 Who hears your prayers and mine, will wisely give
 What most we need that we may perfect grow.

This poem by Fr Tom Pollock was printed by Mowbray & Co. without the author's name. We know that it is by Fr Tom because a copy in the Birmingham Library Archive (MS 1285/1/81e) is labelled "By Revd T.B.P." in the distinctive handwriting of Charlotte Ratcliff, a prominent supporter of the church who is commemorated by a plaque on the panelling beside the altar in the Lady Chapel.

St Alban's Events Calendar for 2026 *

Easter Triduum: April 2nd, 3rd and 4th

Maundy Thursday: Sung Mass 7.30 p.m.

followed by the Watch (Tenebrae style) till midnight

Good Friday: 10.30 a.m. — Stations of the Cross (*Choir practice after stations*)

12.00 noon — Liturgy (*Followed by Hot Cross Buns*)

Holy Saturday: 9.30 a.m — Morning Prayer, (*followed by preparations for Easter*)
Easter Vigil — 8.00 p.m.

Weekday Feast Day, with Said Mass:

Saturday April 25th — St Mark — 10.00 a.m

Parish Festivals:

*These Saturday Masses will include a **Parish Lunch** after the Sung Mass at 11.00 a.m.*

June 27th — St Alban's Patronal ✦ *Rowan Williams to preach*
(*June 26th, talk at St George's*)

September 12th — Holy Cross

Heritage Open Days

Friday, 11th September to Sunday 20th 2026. (*To be advertised*)

** This list will be updated as necessary in the magazine and on the website.*

What has Been Happening Recently

Shrove Tuesday

The smell of cooking emanated from the parish rooms as the Shrove Tuesday Pancake party got underway. In preparation for Lent, cupboards were being cleared of eggs, flour, milk, lemons, maple syrup, sugar and Cointreau! Amanda and Rachel created the batter and were the principal pancake producers though some of us tried and found ourselves better suited to the eating of them rather than in the cooking of them.



We welcomed members of the local community and it was lovely to see Maggie back.

A side interest on the evening was the winter Olympics and the rivalry between Canada and Great Britain in the men's curling event. Some may say the better side won but that is debateable, Amy.



14.02.26 – St Valentine’s Day with a difference

We welcomed *Musica D’Outroira* at the start of their European tour, promoting their new CD, *Still Life*.

The group is an early music ensemble directed by Pablo Devigo, who has used our church to practice and perform in many times before. Last year he brought his group to Birmingham to record this current CD *Still Life* and wanted to give this free concert in acknowledgement of the welcome and support he and his group were given in its creation.

Follow this link to listen to Pablo talk about the development of the idea to the finished CD. It contains some wonderful images of St Alban’s church and the sound is quite sublime which is commented on in the youtube link below. The sound engineer says that very little had to be done to the sound processing due to the excellent acoustic he had to work with. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76fMzyI52ds&list=RD76fMzyI52ds&start_radio=](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76fMzyI52ds&list=RD76fMzyI52ds&start_radio=1) [If this link does not work, look up Pablo Devigo - *Still Life*: Early Baroque Fantasy.]

We wish them well and look forward to them returning to record their second CD.

Below are images captured on the day.

Cynthia Somerville



Life so far 2 My University Experiences by Enfys Sykes

My first year of university was definitely as unforgettable as many of you told me it would be. Moving into accommodation is a very surreal experience. Suddenly being put in a room and forced to share a kitchen/common area with five strangers is quite daunting!! I do have to say there was some questionable moments in terms of cleanliness of the area (mainly due to the guys), but overall, I did enjoy living with them and actually ended up living with one of my flatmates in my second year when we had to find our own accommodation. I can thankfully report back that all of us were friends and would in fact hang out most days. Spending our time watching movies, playing uno and various other card games, as well as going on walks, weather permitting.

Additionally, I continued my love of dancing and joined the kpop dance society in my university. I managed to get into the competition team and performed at GHGH 2025 in March. GHGH stands for Go Hard or Go Home). Our team won 3rd place in the intermediate category and we had lots of fun. You can watch us on YouTube: Konnect dance society GHGH UK 2025 kpop intermediate. This year I have made it back onto the competition team and will be performing in Nottingham in March. I am very grateful that I am able to dance again.

My course, Japanese studies, is definitely a challenging one but a very beautiful language and interesting history and culture. Amidst my studies I took part in a translation competition within university and won second place. This is the haiku and translation, I hope you enjoy:

蜜柑の花	The star that has died,
さざめく	The flower of clementine,
星死せるらし	Youthful, bold and bright

Although I took a few liberties, I feel like it portrays the meaning well, so I will let you ponder on it yourselves, as that's the true beauty of haikus.

I should also mention, as I am sure many of you are wondering, that the move did go well. Although, downsizing is definitely a task filled with challenges, it has let us find many hidden treasures buried in various nooks and crannies of our house. Huddersfield is definitely colder than Birmingham, but it has many beautiful woods to explore and I have been slowly uncovering my dad's childhood as he fondly reminisces.

Finally, second year is going well. I have finished my first semester, fuelled by various forms of sweet treats that my housemates and I share. I am enjoying living in my student house, I have decorated my room to my heart's content. Although the student house is old, it does have a charm to it, and Oxford is a really beautiful city, even if it is expensive!

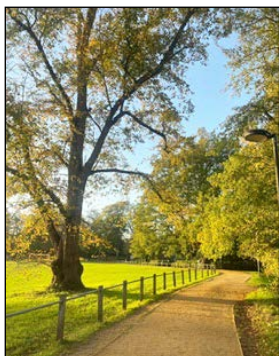
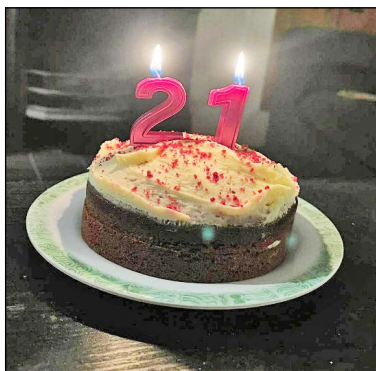
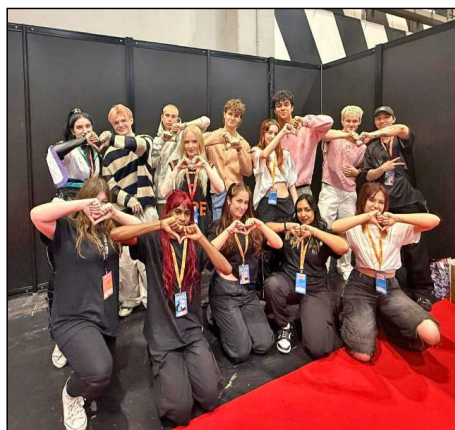
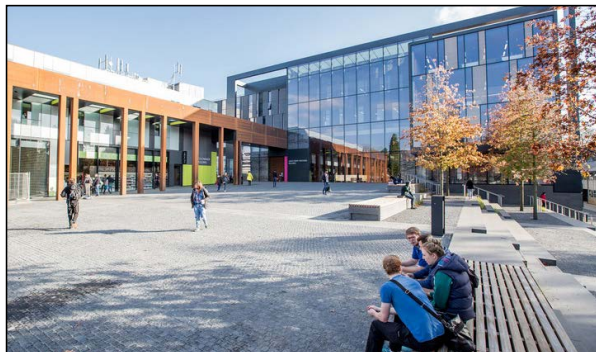
I recently celebrated my 21st birthday, which feels a bit odd to say, but I believe I spent it well. I am currently working as a waitress in a place called Ramen Korner — a Japanese restaurant and as my dad says, “*very course appropriate*”.

At the time of writing, I am working and waiting for my first day back at uni. I am mentally preparing for a hard semester and the progression into the going to university in Japan for next academic year. Very exciting but very nerve-wracking!

Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed my update on life so far.

Enfys

Photographs from Enfys



*We thank Enfys for her insight
into her gap year and first year at
university.
We look forward to the next stage in
her life's journey*

Cynthia

Pearson Church Organists — Concert Series 2026

A report on the Opening Weekend of the Concert Series



*Pearson Church Organist, Andrew Scott
with DoM Angela Sones*

Andrew Scott, (Director of Music at St Michael & All Angels, Croydon and Director of Harrison & Harrison Organ Builders, Durham) opened our 2026 Pearson Church Organists Concert Series in style, on Saturday, 21st March with a splendid Lenten styled programme of music.

It was wonderful to welcome Andrew back to St Alban's as he had featured in last years series too. Andrew had enjoyed his weekend and the whole experience that our wonderful church has to offer so much last year that he had asked to play again in this years series!

The first concert of our new series coincided with our Secondary Patron, St Patrick's Patronal Festival. An enjoyable and action packed day started with our Patronal Mass which was followed by a Patronal lunch. We were then treated to a very informative lecture by Dr Andrew Harvey, on the theology of the Pollock brothers.

There were some fabulous music choices over the three services that Andy played for on our St Patrick's Patronal Festival weekend. It was lovely to welcome some new faces to our church over



Dr. Andrew Harvey delivering his lecture on the Pollock brothers



the weekend, to the services and to Andy's concert. A splendid festival feel was enjoyed by all!

We look forward to welcoming former organ scholar at St Alban's church, Keith Dale to play next months Pearson Church Organists Concert weekend. Keith's organ concert will be at 1.00 pm on April 25th and followed by a buffet lunch.

Admission Free with a Retiring Collection for the St Alban's Organ Restoration Appeal.

Angela Sones

*Left: Pearson Church Organist, Keith Dale,
former Organ Scholar at St Alban's and our next recitalist
on Saturday April 25th at 1.00pm.*

Pearson Church Organists — Concert Series 2026

Following the success of the Pearson Church Organists Concert Series of 2025, we are pleased to announce the 2026 series, which started in March.

Lunchtime concerts are on the Saturday before the fourth Sunday of a month at 1.00 – 1.45 p.m. [*Please note it is not the fourth Saturday of every month — the Church calendar does not work that way.*] These are all free admission with a retiring collection for the St Alban's Organ Restoration Appeal.

We need to raise £100,000 to preserve our organ for future generations and to ensure that we can continue to provide an excellent standard of music. A simple buffet will be available in St Patrick's room, following each lunchtime concert.

The June Concert, on Saturday June 27th, coincides with St Alban's Patronal Festival Service, which will take place at 11.00 a.m. All are welcome to join us for this celebratory service for our Patron Saint. The June Concert will be at 3.00 – 3.45 p.m.

We are extremely fortunate to have some of the very finest organists in the country playing in our Pearson Organists Concert Series this year.

David Briggs, now internationally renowned organ recitalist, was eager to feature in this years series, although he was already booked-up on all of the 4th Sunday weekends this year, so we decided to do something different on the third weekend of September, with a Choral Masterclass, Choral Evensong and Evening Concert at 7.30 p.m. after a buffet reception. These events on 19th September will be ticketed. David will also play for 10.00 a.m. Mass the following day.

April 25th / 26th — Keith Dale (*Queen Mary's School, Thirsk*)
Former Organ Scholar at St Alban's

May 23rd / 24th — Iain Simcock (*Director of Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge*)
Former Organist at St Alban's

June 27th / 28th — Tim Hone (*St George's Church, Cullercoates*)

July 25th / 26th — Tom Stockwell (*St Augustine, Kilburn*)

August 22nd / 23rd — John Butt (*Musical Director, Dunedin Consort*)
Former Organist at St Alban's

September 19th / 20th — David Briggs (*Cathedral St John the Divine, New York*)
Former Organist at St Alban's

September 26th / 27th — James Lancelot (*Tewkesbury*)
James's father was Assistant Priest at St Patrick's church and James frequently played for services at both St Patrick's and St Alban's churches).

October 24th / 25th — Angela Sones (*St Alban's Church, Conybere Street*)

There have been numerous comments and messages from colleagues and organists around the country saying such things as “*I only hear good things about St Alban's*” and “*It's wonderful how music is coming alive again*”. Our best kept secret is really getting out!

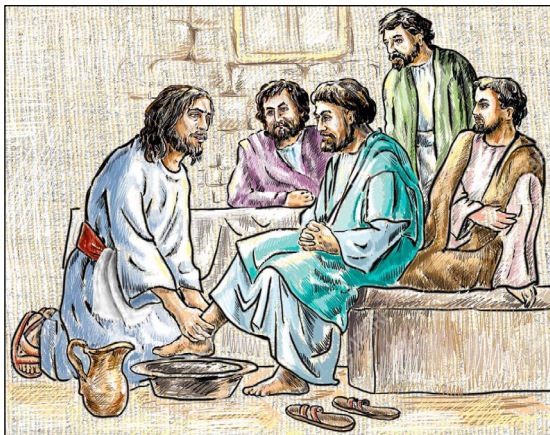
Angela Sones, Director of Music

The Church's Year — April 2026

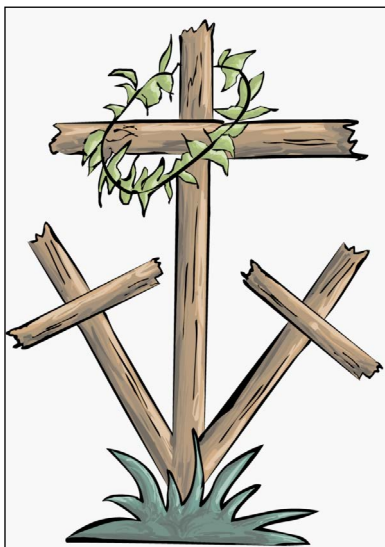
Last month's article, about March, ended on Palm Sunday, March 29th, the beginning of the holiest week in the year for Christians, Holy Week itself, which culminates in the *Triduum*, the "Three Days", of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Eve. So with the beginning of April, we are in the middle of this week, which is the climax of the Christian year. April 2nd is Maundy Thursday, so named because of Jesus' commandment to his

disciples at the Last Supper, "*A new commandment (Latin *mandatum*) I give you, that you should love one another*".

We might reflect why he found it necessary at the end of his, perhaps, two years ministry, in which he had been accompanied by his disciples, to give them this commandment! He knew, perhaps, that they could be a pretty turbulent and quarrelsome lot (plenty of evidence for this in the Gospels!) and therefore in need of this reminder. So perhaps it has always been in the history of

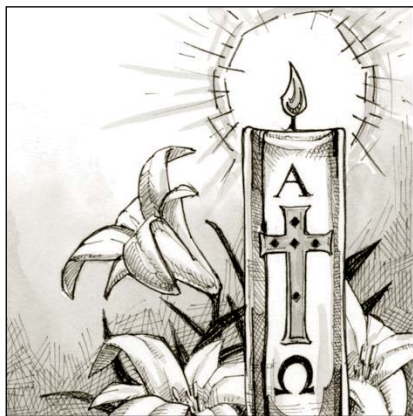


the Church and in our individual parishes. It was on this occasion, as we know, that he instituted the most famous ceremony in the world, that of Holy Communion or the Mass, whatever name it may be called by, by the extraordinary drama of taking bread and wine and declaring that they were his body and blood and commanding us to continue this "*in memory of me*" — which, whatever the failings of the Church, it has continued to do. To be able to share in this holy ceremony is the greatest privilege which any of us could receive.



Good Friday April 3rd, is arguably the most important day in the Christian year, the day of our redemption, therefore the fulfilment of the very purpose of Christ's incarnation, his taking of human flesh and blood, in the first place. In no other religion has its founder undergone such pain and torment in order to achieve the purpose of salvation for the human race. There is a vast difference between other religions having great religious teachers — as they undoubtedly do have — and our having God himself, showing his love and achieving the purpose of his life, by dying for us. Hence the vital importance of being in church for at least some time today.

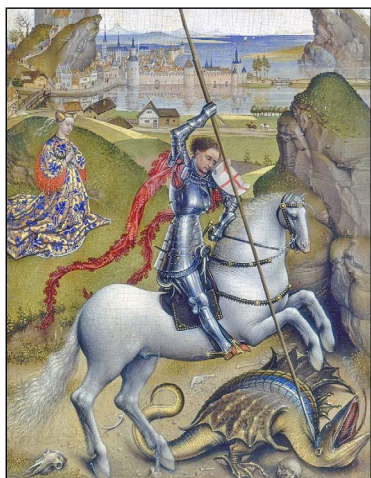
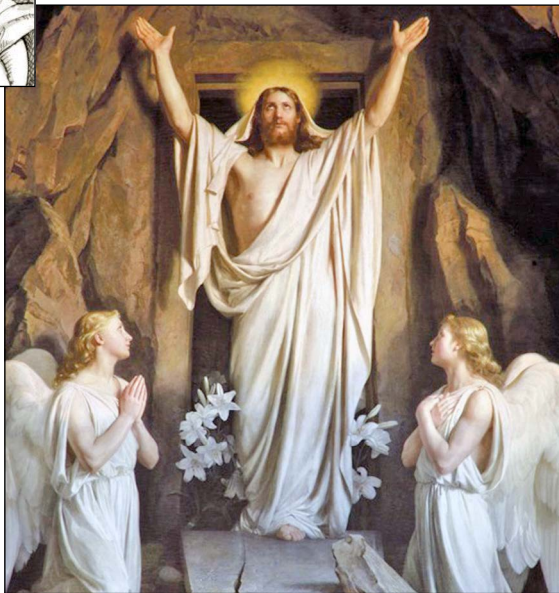
Easter Eve April 4th, is a time of reflection and meditation, the day when Jesus was lying in the cold tomb — with no sign of the tremendous event that



was to follow. This is the last day of Lent and can be spent in preparation for the greatest of all Christian festivals, Easter Day, Sunday April 5th, when we celebrate the rising of Jesus from the dead, the resurrection, on which the entire Christian religion is based. Some time ago I wrote two articles, *Why is the resurrection of Jesus important* and *What was the resurrection body of Jesus*. Anyone who wants a copy of either article please send me an email giving your name and postal address —

write to: andrewlenox44@gmail.com. One of the most powerful pieces of evidence in favour of the resurrection is the transformation in the attitude of the disciples — from being a group of dispirited and bereaved people they were completely changed — and that change is possible for everyone who accepts Jesus Christ into his or her life.

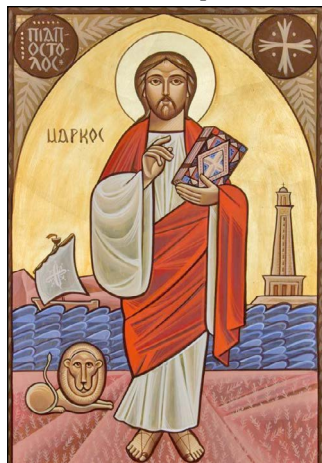
So begins the period of Easter, which continues to Pentecost, on Sunday May 24th, seven weeks later.



Towards the end of April we have two Red Letter days, the first of which is on Thursday April 23rd, the Feast of St George, a martyr and, of course, the patron saint of *Merrie Engle*. He was believed to have been a Roman soldier who died a noble martyr's death, like so many, in the last, and the most intense, of all the persecutions of the Church in about 304 — not long after, Constantine became Emperor, the first Christian Emperor (probably under the influence of his mother, St Helena) and the persecutions ceased. Once again, we can be reminded of the many Christians throughout the world who, even today — alas! probably especially today — are suffering either terrible suffering or death itself because of their faith

— I think especially of many Christians in China and of the 70,000 (the latest figure given which I have read) of the Christians in North Korea who have been imprisoned because of their faith.

Two days later, on Saturday April 25th, we celebrate St Mark, the Evangelist and reputed author of the Gospel named after him. The Gospel itself is a fascinating document —



by far the shortest of all the Gospels and virtually the whole of which is also incorporated in the much longer Gospels of Matthew and Luke. It was therefore almost certainly the first to be written — at least in the form in which we now have it — and has been described as “the memoirs of St Peter” because one account says that Mark was an assistant to St Peter and that his Gospel consists essentially of what Peter told him about Jesus. It is written in a vigorous style of Greek and has a sense of urgency about it — the words “immediately” and “straightway” appear again and again. One gets the impression of Jesus moving vibrantly, almost dynamically, from one situation to another, confronting the devil head on, issuing his challenges to those he encounters — and then, if they

don’t respond, he moves on — one gets the impression he doesn’t waste time with people. I think of the closing words of Albert Schweitzer’s *“The Quest of the Historical Jesus”* — *He commands. And to those who obey him, whether they be rich or poor, high or low, he will reveal himself in the toils and tribulations they will pass through in his fellowship and, as an ineffable mystery, they will learn in their own experience who he is.*

Almost at the end of April, on Wednesday, April 29th, the Church celebrates Catherine of Siena, who died in 1380 (not to be confused with Catharine of Alexandria, another of the martyrs of the last of the Roman persecutions). Catherine of Siena, who died when she was fairly young, was someone from a not very distinguished background who became renowned for the extraordinary depth of her spirituality, which caused her to become even the adviser to the popes of the time. I remember selections from her letters being read out at The Stations of the Cross by Pope John Paul II at the Colosseum in Rome on Good Friday 1981, which I was privileged to attend. One of the most famous Roman Catholic churches in Birmingham is named after her, on Bristol Street, just a few hundred yards from my former parish of St Luke’s. May the spirit of St Catherine of Siena inspire us as we advance through this season of Easter!



Fr Andrew

Calendar for April 2026

1st	Wednesday	Wednesday of Holy Week
2nd	Thursday	Maundy Thursday
3rd	Friday	Good Friday
4th	Saturday	Holy Saturday
5th	Sunday	Easter Day
6th	Monday	Easter Monday
7th	Tuesday	Easter Tuesday
8th	Wednesday	Easter Wednesday
9th	Thursday	Easter Thursday
10th	Friday	Easter Friday
11th	Saturday	Easter Saturday
12th	Sunday	Low Sunday
13th	Monday	Weekday of Easter (<i>St Martin I, Pope, Mr</i>)
14th	Tuesday	Weekday of Easter
15th	Wednesday	Weekday of Easter
16th	Thursday	Weekday of Easter
17th	Friday	Weekday of Easter
18th	Saturday	Weekday of Easter
19th	Sunday	3rd Sunday of Easter
20th	Monday	Weekday of Easter
21st	Tuesday	Weekday of Easter (<i>St Anselm, B, Dr</i>)
22nd	Wednesday	Weekday of Easter
23rd	Thursday	St George, Patron of England
24th	Friday	Weekday of Easter (<i>St Fidelis of Sigmaringen, Pr, Mr</i>)
25th	Saturday	St Mark, Evangelist
26th	Sunday	4th Sunday of Easter
27th	Monday	Weekday of Easter
28th	Tuesday	Weekday of Easter (<i>St Peter Chanel, Pr, Mr</i>)
29th	Wednesday	St Catherine of Siena V, Dr (<i>Patron of Europe</i>)
30th	Thursday	Weekday of Easter (<i>St Pius V, Pope, Religious</i>)

Music in St Alban's for April 2026

Thursday 2nd — Maundy Thursday — 7.30 p.m.

Mass setting: George Oldroyd: Mass of the Quiet Hour — Kyrie and Gloria
Missa XI Orbis Factor — Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei

Hymns: 273 And now, O Father, mindful of the love
513 God is love, and where true love is
268 Pange Lingua (for the procession to Altar of Repose)
515 Psalm 22 (for the stripping of the Altar)

Anthem: Ubi caritas — Ola Gjeilo

Friday 3rd — Good Friday 12.00 noon

No Mass setting

Hymns: 95 When I survey the wondrous cross
516a Reproaches — The Veneration of the Cross
517 Crux Fidelis

Saturday 4th — Holy Saturday — 8.00 p.m.

Mass setting: Harold Darke in F (Gloria) Sung Lord's Prayer
Exsultet

Hymns: 121 This joyful Eastertide
113 Love's redeeming work is done
120 Thine be the Glory

Anthem: The strife is o'er — Henry Ley

Voluntary: Paraphrase on 'Judah Maccabeus' (Handel) Op.90
— Alexandre Guilmant

Sunday 5th — Easter Day — 10.00 a.m.

Mass setting: Harold Darke in E Sung Lord's prayer

Hymns: 104 At the Lamb's high feast we sing
125 Alleluya! Alleluya! Alleluya!
114 Now is eternal life
117 The day of resurrection!

Anthem: Ye choirs of new Jerusalem — Charles Villiers Stanford

Voluntary: Variations on an Easter Theme — John Rutter
(Angela Sones and Richard Hartshorn)

Sunday 12th — 2nd Sunday of Easter — 10.00 a.m.

Mass setting: Herbert Sumsion in F Sung Lord's Prayer

Hymns: 105 Christ the Lord is risen again! (Tii)
103 Alleluya! Alleluya!
115 Now the green blade riseth
119 The strife is o'er, the battle done

Anthem: Come ye faithful — Sir Reginald Sparshatt Thatcher
Voluntary: Toccata from Symphonie No.5 — Charles-Marie Widor

Sunday 19th — 3rd Sunday of Easter — 10.00 a.m.

Mass setting: Mass of the Quiet Hour — Oldroyd Sung Lord's Prayer
Hymns: 486 We have a gospel to proclaim
362 Glorious things of thee are spoken (T185 Abbot's Leigh)
375 I danced in the morning
345 Christ is the King, O friends rejoice
Anthem: O for a closer walk with God — Charles Villiers Stanford
Voluntary: Final from Symphonie No.1 — Louis Vierne

Sunday 26th — 4th Sunday of Easter — 10.00 a.m.

Mass setting: John Ireland in C Sung Lord's Prayer
Hymns: 374 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
338 At the name of Jesus
369 Happy are they, they that love God
376 I heard the voice of Jesus say
Anthem: The Lord is my shepherd — Howard Goodall
Voluntary: Allegro Appassionato from Sonata No.1 — Basil Harwood
Pearson Organist: Keith Dale

Sunday 26th — Solemn Choral Evensong & Benediction 6.00 p.m.

Responses: William Smith
Psalm: 29 (Gerald Knight)
Canticles: John Ireland in F
Hymns: 77 The God of love my Shepherd is
463 Thine forever! God of love (Tii)
Anthem: Greater Love — John Ireland
Voluntary: Capriccio John Ireland
Pearson Organist: Keith Dale

Marian Anthem — Regina Coeli throughout Easter period

Choir rehearsals: Thursdays, 7.15 pm; Sundays, 9.00 am;
Thursday 2nd, 6.30 pm; Friday 3rd, 11.00 am; Saturday 4th, 7.00 pm;
Sunday 26th, Solemn Choral Evensong & Benediction 4.30 pm

*Director of Music — Angela Sones,
Music Secretary — Bryce Somerville*

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