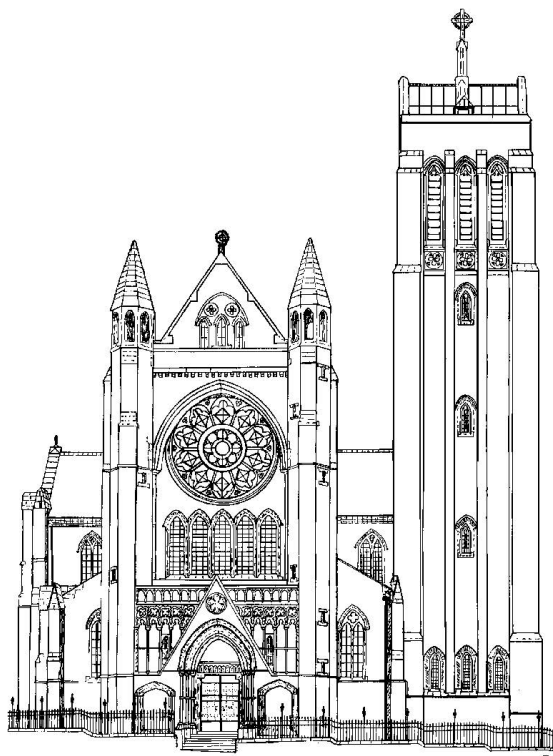




The Church of
St Alban the Martyr
Birmingham 12



St ALBAN AND St PATRICK PARISH MAGAZINE



Maryellen Fellows

May
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

Confessions: By appointment

Authorized Eucharistic Ministers *(Bishop's Permission)*

Mrs Verna Smith-Broadbent
Mrs Amanda Cadman ☎: 0121 624 3865
Dr Christopher Smith ☎: 0121 471 1301

Churchwardens

Dr Christopher A. Smith
219, Gristhorpe Road,
Selly Oak
Birmingham B29 7SP
☎: 0121 471 1301
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Churchwarden Emeritus

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From The Vicarage...

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

We are now in Eastertide and surrounded by signs of spring and new life. The flowers have returned to the church, which makes a wonderful difference to the atmosphere of the building.

On Low Sunday, we held the Vestry Meeting and the APCM. At the Vestry Meeting (or Meeting of Parishioners), our current Churchwardens, Chris and Amanda, were very gracious in accepting their nominations and have been elected for the 2026–2027 period. Please pray for them. The rôle carries significant responsibility within the governance structures of the church, but it is also a key rôle in supporting the mission of the church within the parish.

Members have also been elected to the PCC — grateful thanks and congratulations to those newly elected. Additionally, two dedicated individuals have been elected to the Deanery Synod, enabling us to offer a strong Catholic voice within the wider CofE Birmingham.

We are now entering Mary's month of May — or "*No Mow May*" as it is now more popularly called! At St Alban's, we shall concentrate on the spiritual tradition

of devotion to Our Lady, "Mother of the New Creation", who, in bearing Christ Jesus our Saviour into the world, has reconciled us to God's creation. In times gone by, families would set up "May altars" at home (a designated table in the corner) decorated with a Marian image, candles, and fresh flowers from the pastures; they would also spend time praying the Rosary together as a family.

At the end of the month, we celebrate the feast of The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This month, our Anglo-Catholic Mission Assistant, Anna, will lead us in May devotions, including both the Rosary and the Stations of the Resurrection, or *Via Lucis* (Way of Light). These will take place in the evening of our Mission Wednesdays. See the weekly Pew Sheet for details.

Please take the time this month to pray for Creation. With all that is happening in the world, we are often reminded of the fragility of life around us. According to the Met Office, Europe is currently the fastest-warming continent on Earth — warming at approximately twice the global average — and April showers are becoming a thing of the past. As you enjoy the last month of spring, may you also enjoy all that blooms to the glory of God and take the time to tend to your devotional life. *Fr Jacob*

Vicar's Report, APCM for 2025

The Feast of Saint Michael and All Angels 2025 marked the date of my Institution and Induction as Vicar of this parish — a rôle that comes with the additional privilege of serving as Chaplain of the Ark St Albans Academy. It took some time to settle into the parish, primarily because the vicarage required renovation following my appointment. Consequently, I did not begin living in the

parish until early last November.

At this APCM, I would like to offer my deep thanks to all who were involved in the arrangements for that occasion. As I have said before, the period of an interregnum is never easy for a parish, and I am sure you would like to thank one another for the work you did together to keep things ticking over.

While thanking people is a good thing to do, it can also be delicate; over-thanking some while under-thanking others can cause offence — or worse, people can be missed out entirely. I would, however, like to offer personal thanks to Fr Andrew for his faithfulness and the unfaltering support he offers this parish. We are very blessed to have such a faithful priest ministering among us.

Since my installation, I have done my best to begin the process of getting to know the parish. This has included engaging with the local mosque, primary schools, local councillors, the police, and local charities. Speaking with them helps me understand how we can best respond to the needs of this community. The Church of Saint Alban the Martyr is, first and foremost, the parish church of Highgate — there is no other! Like my predecessors — especially the Pollock brothers — I came here to Highgate (or “*Vaughtons Hole*” to them) acutely aware that this parish has great social need, and mindful that the Anglo-Catholic faith in the Diocese of Birmingham is in rapid decline.

The latest revision of the deprivation index shows us moving from 109 to 123 out of 12,154 parishes. We rank 11th for child poverty at 88%; 12th for pensioner poverty at 74%; and 31st for working-age poverty at 63%. Furthermore, we have the lowest male life expectancy in the diocese at 73 years.

While this situation is challenging, it is also an opportunity to live out our faith and bring real-world change to this parish and across the city. Proper Anglo-Catholic mission should only ever have a positive impact; whatever we do in the parish church is for the enrichment of the people of this place.

At my first PCC meeting, I began working with the members on our vision and priorities for mission and ministry. These are three-fold: Families and Young Adults, Catholic

Spirituality, and Hospitality. We subsequently held a parish away day early in 2026 to explore them further. These priorities are vital; without a vision, there is no direction. Energy and resources are quickly sapped, those wishing to join us will find us flailing, and potential funders will pass us by. These priorities give us a God-given purpose rather than merely reacting to immediate demands.

Work regarding ‘Catholic Spirituality’ and ‘Hospitality’ has begun most notably with support from Anna Henderson, our Anglo-Catholic Mission Assistant. Anna has supported us with “Mission Wednesdays”, serving at midweek Mass and leading Rosary prayers.

Regarding Families and Young Adults: annual attendance from the school has slipped and needs to be reinstated. However, my rôle at the Academy enables me to interact with around 804 students, providing weekly collective worship. So, while you may not see a church full of young people on a Sunday morning, I see something very different during the week.

Chandos Primary School, under Headteacher Mrs Debbie Norbury, brings further opportunities to engage with young children and their parents. The school visited for Christmas in 2025 and had a wonderful time. Many long-term residents of the parish had never stepped inside the church building before — including some who identify as Christian. This is a situation I am pleased to be correcting.

In terms of ‘Hospitality,’ we welcomed the Birmingham Bach Choir, which provided us with excellent music — additional to our own — and a wonderful opportunity to meet people from across the city.

We have seen new visitors on Sunday mornings, both in the congregation and the

choir. It is a sadness that some have not stayed, but going forward, I hope this will change and that we will be renewed by welcoming new people into our midst. I am aware that large groups of visitors can feel overwhelming, so it may be that growth will happen gradually.

I shall conclude by sharing the prayer point that Bishop Michael invited me to share with him. The Bishop asked me for a specific prayer point that he can share in as he prays for the parish. Since my installation, my prayer has been: *“Lord, send us people who*

can help us love Highgate.”

I have mentioned this in several sermons: we are here to love Highgate because God loves Highgate. I invite you to make that your prayer, too: *“Lord, send us people who can help us love Highgate.”*

As we receive the reports for 2025, let us be mindful of the Lord’s missionary call. Let us be thankful for all the people and resources the Lord sends us so that we can fulfil our mission to this parish and to this city.

Fr Jacob

Annual Vestry and Annual Parochial Church Meeting

At the annual Vestry meeting held at 12:00 noon on Sunday the 12th of April in St Patrick’s Room Christopher Smith and Amanda Cadman were elected as churchwardens for a further year; there being no other candidates.

The 106th Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) followed, attended by 10 members of the electoral roll entitled to vote at the meeting and two other members of the congregation as observers. Apologies were received from 11 other members of the electoral roll. The minutes of the 105th APCM were presented, followed by a series of reports.

Vicar’s Report. The parish has been in interregnum for much of 2025 from the retirement of Fr Gerry Sykes on the 11th of January to the appointment of Fr Jacob Pallett on the 29th of September. Fr Jacob made a brief report that he had been spending time getting to know parish and Academy, and was now settled in the Vicarage, following repairs and modernisation by the Diocese. He thanked Fr Andrew Lenox-Conyngham for his help to the parish during the interregnum and

continuing assistance when not needed at St Agatha’s. He mentioned the help of Anna Henderson lay Mission Assistant, funded by the Harlow Trust at Keble College. She prepared materials for and led the Rosary in the church during Advent 2025 and Lent 2026 and assists at our low Mass on Mission Wednesdays. He prayed: *“Lord, send us people who can us love Highgate.” (the full report is on p 1)*

Electoral Roll. Rachel Smith reported that the roll stood at 32 persons, of whom 6 lived in the Parish. Since last year one person has been added to the roll, a regular member who failed to fill in the form by the deadline when a new roll was drawn up for the APCM in 2025.

Annual Report and Statement of Financial Activities. Copies of this were presented to the meeting. This and previous annual reports and financial statements are available from our parish website at <http://www.saintalban.co.uk/documents/>.

Financial Activities. As Treasurer of the Parochial Church Council (PCC), Christopher Smith presented the Statement of Financial Activities for 2025, expanding on the notes which are included with the

annual report and financial statements. He reported that the General Fund had a surplus of £727 for 2025, leading to a year end balance of £3,944 — but this was a reserve on only 35 days average expenditure; a balance of nearly £14,000 would be required for a reserve of four months' expenditure. Combining income for the General Fund with grants from the Aspinall Trust that were technically restricted, but for expenditure that would otherwise be from the General Fund, 45% of income was from individual donors, with a further 11% from Gift Aid claimed on eligible donations; 36% from grants from the Aspinall Trust, the Trustees of St Alban's School and the St Patrick's Fund; 4% from lettings; and 3% (£2,000) income from external work carried out by Printing Unit. With the ending of external work by the printing unit due to age and ill health, we will not have further income from this source. The total income from individual donors was almost the same as it was 1996, but due to inflation its purchasing power was now only half of what it was then. More regular donors were needed. On the same basis the largest parts of our expenditure from the General Fund were our contribution to the Diocesan Common Fund at 53%; insurance at 17%; vicarage & vicar's expenses at 5%; followed by Gas, Electricity and the monitored alarm system at 4% each.

Fabric Goods and Ornaments of the Church. As Churchwarden, Christopher Smith also presented the report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church, summarising the material included in the PCC's Annual Report under a number of headings:

Wiring. During 2025 electrical faults identified in the report from an inspection in 2024 were rectified.

Heating. In May 2025 all but three of the eleven gas heaters in the church failed inspection and could not be repaired. The Church of England has committed to reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and we are not permitted to replace the failed gas heaters. During the winter of 2025/26 we have supplemented the remaining gas heaters with a temporary arrangement of portable infrared heaters to warm part of the nave and electric convectors by the choir stalls. The number of electric heaters that can be used is limited by the total power available in the church. During 2025 the PCC paid £2,000 to obtain an "*Energy Saving and Decarbonisation Strategy*" report on the church. Heat loss calculations are needed to identify an acceptable method of heating for the church and provide a basis to apply for faculty permission and seek funding. Quotations for heat loss calculations of £750 and £2,500, with an additional £3,500 for heating option appraisal were received, but these quotations required the prior provision of a measured building survey likely to cost in the region of £5,000. In 2026 the PCC will need to decide how to proceed. The vestries and hall are heated by a separate gas-fired heating/hot water system apart from the choir vestry, which is heated independently by a gas boiler and radiators.

Lighting. During 2025 the remaining fluorescent lighting in the vestries and church hall (St Patrick's Room) was replaced with LED lighting. However, the church lighting system in the church consists mainly of inaccessible filament and discharge lamps installed in 2012, which use a lot of power. Replacing these with more efficient LED lamps will require specialist work. The floodlights, installed in 2001, are disconnected. They require complete renewal with new cabling and LED lights, when money is available.

Church Floor. The hole in the floor of the north transept, following the removal of asbestos in 2022 remains to be repaired. Plans were prepared in 2023, but this work is on hold, as funds are needed for other more urgent work. Other areas of the church floor are in poor condition, particularly the tiles at the west end of the nave.

Choir Vestry. Work to install a new quarry tile floor incorporating thermal insulation was completed in March 2025. The vestry was redecorated and the old fluorescent tube lighting replaced with LED lighting. Donors paid for the tiles and light fittings.

Hall and Kitchen. Work to alter the kitchen roof to slope away from the hall and discharge rainwater through chutes in the parapet and external down pipes was completed in January 2025. However, there was further water ingress to the kitchen area, traced to defects in the hall roof adjacent to the kitchen. Despite work to address this during 2025 further ingress occurred. The contractor who had carried out this work was unresponsive and appears to have ceased to trade. In December 2025 following heavy snowfall impeding the flow of water across the flat roof pooling caused major water entry, bringing down part of the ceiling of the lobby adjacent to the kitchen. Further work has been carried out in 2026 (by a new contractor), including replacing flashing around the flat roof and diverting rainwater from other roofs that used to discharge onto the flat roof into pipes to the outfalls to reduce the risk of lying snow causing pooling on the roof in future. Renewal of the ceiling and redecoration will be needed once it is certain that there will not be further water entry. The hall carpet, flooded in 2023, remains to be replaced once further water entry has been prevented.

Church Organ. A condition report in 2024 showed all the leather work needs renewal.

Refurbishment will cost about £75,000, while modernisation of the electronic piston capture system would cost a further £22,200. In 2024 the choir slider machine was refurbished for £4,830 and in 2025 the great under-action was refurbished for £9,850. At the end of 2025 the Organ Fund stood at £7,887. Fund-raising through organ concerts continues.

Silverware. During 2025 several items were repaired at a cost of £4,494, funded by our Henry Lee Sanctuary Fund. The six large Baroque-style antique silver-plated high-altar candlesticks and matching crucifix were refurbished. An amethyst was fitted to a long-empty socket on the base of a large silver Ciborium and a missing pearl replaced in the mounting, making it again fit for use. A smaller silver Ciborium and a silver incense spoon were repaired, a silver-plated water and wine cruet set refurbished and five other candlesticks repaired.

Further reports were made on:

Deanery Synod. The Handsworth and Central Deanery Synod had met three times during 2025.

Choir and Music. In 2025 Director of Music Angela Sones and Music Secretary Bryce Somerville organised four concerts by organists with connections to churches designed by John Loughborough Pearson. The first, by internationally renowned organist David Briggs, was a ticketed event, while admission to the others was free with a collection for our Organ Fund. The combined audience was 156 and over £5,500 was raised for the Organ Fund. Nine more organ concerts have been arranged for 2026. The Sunday morning choir has five to seven members. Increasing numbers of visitors from other churches assist at monthly Choral Evensong and other special services, for which visiting organists are hired to allow the Director of Music to conduct the choir.

Printing Unit. In 2025 as well as printing for our own church, the unit printed magazines for two other churches, two service booklets for Warwickshire Masons, other small items from WIs etc and a quarterly magazine for an amateur radio society. The unit has provided an income of £2,000 annually to the church General Fund from the profits of its external work for some years. However, Maureen and Edward cannot continue, due to age and increasing infirmity, and will no longer undertake external work in 2026, although Maureen still produces our magazine. The meeting agreed the need to arrange a celebration of their work.

Servers. Harry Daniels, Simon Wainwright and Rashawn Farrell kept up the standard of serving at Sunday Mass, assisted when available by Andrew Harvey and Simon and Samuel Mebrahtu. Servers from St Agatha's Sparkbrook, St Mary's Selly Oak or St George's Edgbaston assisted at special services.

Foodbank. Amanda Cadman reported that she continued to provide weekly food parcels

to those in need in the parish, although demand was currently lower than in the recent past.

PCC and Deanery Synod Elections.

At the APCM the terms of office Edward Fellows, Andrew Harvey and Fay Wilson as PCC members, and of Andrew Harvey and Amanda Cadman as representatives on Deanery Synod expired. Andrew Harvey and Fay Wilson were elected to the PCC and Andrew Harvey and Amanda Cadman were elected to the Deanery Synod for a further three years. In each case there were no other candidates. Edward Fellows, retiring after many years of service as Churchwarden and PCC Member received a vote of thanks from the meeting for all he had done for St Alban's Church the PCC Secretary would write to him to express the PCC's thanks.

Independent Examiner. William Cooper, who has been independent examiner of the PCC's accounts for several years, was reappointed as examiner for 2026.

The meeting closed with prayer.

Chris Smith, Churchwarden

St Alban's Events Calendar for 2026 *

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.*

A New Picture of St Alban's in 1958

In early April we received in the post a mounted photograph of the interior of the church, dated 1958 on the rear. The print is on a textured paper, which was once popular as pictures did not acquire finger marks as readily as those on smooth photographic paper did. Unfortunately, the uneven reflection from the textured surface limits the quality of scanned images like that below, which has been filtered to remove rogue reflections at the expense of sharpness and resolution.

At the left in this picture is the pulpit designed by Arthur Stansfeld Dixon, and on the gradin behind the High Altar are the great brass arts

and craft candlesticks from the Birmingham Guild, also designed by Dixon. Later in 1958 both were swept away on the initiative of Fr Harding, who had no liking for the products of the Arts and Crafts movement. The pulpit was replaced by our present Georgian style one, while the candlesticks, now used only in Advent and Lent, were replaced by the silver-plated antique Baroque style set, recently refurbished, which he purchased in memory of his predecessor Fr Dudley Clark. On the right stands our statue of St Alban, where our great brass eagle lectern originally stood.

Chris Smith



Maggie Haynes, who sent us the photograph from Eastbourne, is the daughter of the late Harriet (Bessie) Haynes (née Winwood), sister to Connie Winwood and Margaret Yardley (née Winwood) whom some older members of our congregation will remember.

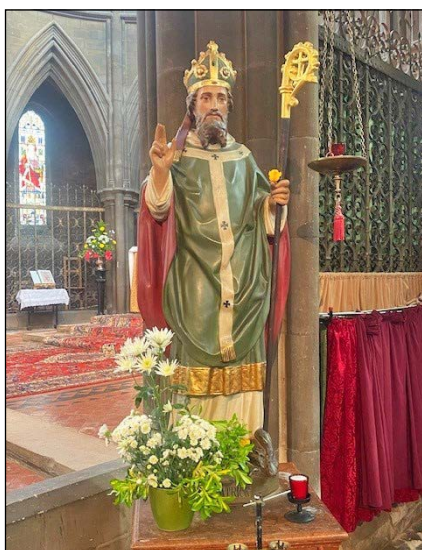
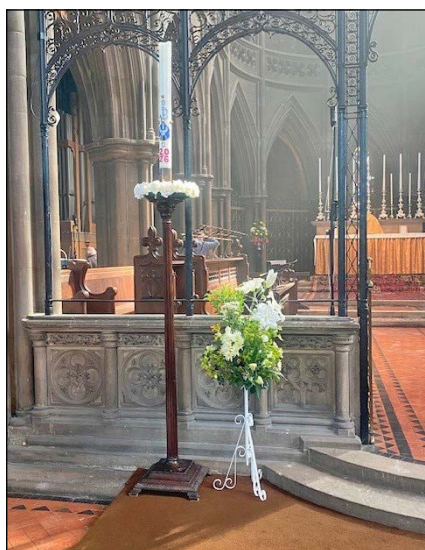
Date for your diary — Amy (*from the choir*) is giving a recital on Sunday June 7th 2026 at 6.00 pm, in church, using our lovely Bechstein grand.

Please come and support our Birmingham Conservatoire scholar.

Easter Day — the many splendid images that members of the congregation may have missed

Firstly the flowers — that started the moment you entered St Albans at the west end and ended at the high altar plus all the statues in between.

Rachel used her artistic talents to create many colourful arrangements using bought and donated flowers — she visited Roy and Irene's garden and took cuttings of their beautiful red and pink camelias



And not to miss out on the fun, Amanda turned her green fingers to creating the garden scene in the porch.

Has anyone spotted the Easter chicks that have been captured in the photographs?

Organ Duet

Secondly — we were treated to an organ duet when Richard Hartshorn joined Angela on the organ bench to play Variations on an



Easter Theme by John Rutter. A masterly performance that brought out a very powerful Gershwin influence in the writing

What a fitting way to end the musical contribution to the Easter celebrations.

News Snippets:

Major progress markers for members of our congregation:

Sam, who is at Birmingham University, is taking his finals this summer. Those three years have certainly flown by.

Amy (*from the choir*) is preparing for her annual recital performance plus dissertations that come at the end of her third year. She then has a fourth year to complete before graduating

Simon is taking his second year exams which he needs to pass to progress into his third year

Christiana is studying hard for her A levels after which she has some important decisions to make about what direction to take next.

We wish them all well.

Ada (*from the choir*) is running the London Marathon on Sunday 26.04.26 in aid of The National Autistic Society, We wish her well and hope that the weather is kind to her and her fellow runners. Looking forward to hearing all about the experience when she returns with her medal.

Ada completed the Marathon in 4hrs 19 mins and this with suffering a knee injury halfway round!

Cynthia

Life so far – 1 University Life by Sam Mebrahtu

Unlike my brother Simon, who chose to study at Imperial College, London; my university course of choice was here in Birmingham which allowed me to experience university life in known surroundings.

My first year saw me cycling along the Bristol Road pathway, that is until my bike was stolen. I also joined in student life and took advantage of the many societies that the university has to offer. This allowed me to make new friends outside of my course of computer studies.

In my second year I took advantage of taking accommodation being offered near Aston University as I had stayed at home in my first year. As part of my studies for this year, I was assigned to a project, along with others from my course, to develop software to match a client's vision. This was good experience to what we can expect after graduation. This was a 6-week assignment, and I am pleased to say that when we presented our findings to the client, they were impressed and liked what they saw resulting in their going to develop it further in-house. Not bad for a first foray into the commercial world.

I am now completing my third year of university life which has proved challenging yet ultimately rewarding. The workload increased quite a bit and it's sometimes difficult to balance assignments with applications for graduate rôles.

I'm considering a master's at the moment, as I'd like the opportunity to do some research. Currently my studies have not allowed me to do much in this field hence my considering this as a next step.

So, any insights that readers might have about graduating from university, doing a master's degree (potentially in Edinburgh) or starting work, would be really appreciated!

Sam



Big Joe lit up as part of the centenary celebrations

An Article from St Alban's Music Secretary

‘Osmotic Outreach?’

As Chris has previously said, it is good for people to be able to come into the church by the West Door, so that their first experience of our Church is the full impact of our beautiful building, with its deliberate focus on the High Altar. The ‘Wow!’ factor. We each do the things that we feel able to do, in order to bring people into the church. For Angela and me, that is musical outreach, hence, amongst other things, the Solemn Choral Evensong and Benediction on the fourth Sunday of each month.

Over the winter, with no church heating, we have had a number of members of our supernumerary choir say that they simply cannot come, because they are elderly and too cold. Hence depleted numbers. Fortunately, warmer weather is upon us, and I have had a number of emails from those people saying that they will once more come to sing with us at the April SCE+B. So that should swell our numbers.

However, the young seem to be more resistant to the cold, and we were able to welcome the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Chamber Choir again on Thursday March 12th, when they delighted us for two hours with a wide-ranging concert:



Britten — Hymn To St Cecilia

Byrd — Civitas Sancti Tui

Imogen Holst — Festival Anthem

Howells — Take Him Earth For Cherishing

Millicent B. James — Finding Your Home

Tippett — Five Spirituals from A Child Of Our Time

The choir made good use of the space as they stood in various places in the church, encircling us when singing Byrd's *Civitas Sancti Tui*. It has been splendid to welcome back those who have variously been to St Alban's as musicians before: Elli-Mae McGlone (Organist at St Peter's Wolverhampton and active in the Society of Women Organists) who has started a two year master's degree in conducting studies; George Moloney who was the organ soloist this evening; Joseph Jacob who is now organist in Walsall Wood, as he starts his one year master's degree, and Josh who is taking a gap year and thoroughly enjoying his immersive musical experience at the Conservatoire and with the CBSO chorus — both under the inspirational leadership of Julian Wilkins, who conducted tonight. I like to think that they were all in turn inspired by this church of St Alban the Martyr, and the welcome they received here

Both the incumbent of St Mary le Strand and the Reverend and Valiant Master of the Temple Church had a bit of a moan to me (when I was in London at the end of last year)

about the then necessity for them to be in their respective churches to supervise the setting up of their churches for concerts. There was naturally, as ministers of religion might, a certain sadness that they felt that currently the stronger call for the use of their signature buildings was for attendance at concerts, rather than attendance at Eucharist. However, I take the view that music can move even the irreligious towards the numinous — the “feeling of the holy”, implying a profound, often aesthetic, experience that transcends normal comprehension — and is a form of outreach.

So too, the concerts we host get more people through the door... And I headed this report “*Osmotic Outreach?*”, because Cynthia delightfully discovered on the Internet that the Conservatoire are using a lovely photograph of them at SATM for their Town Hall lunchtime concert with Thomas Trotter ... On June 7th 2027!

**Town Hall
Lunchtime Organ
Concert 26/27:
Thomas Trotter with
Royal Birmingham
Conservatoire
Chamber Choir**
07 Jun 2027



So their visit has made a lasting impression upon them, or at least their organisers? I hope that those who turn up at the *Town Hall* and find that it is not SATM will not be disappointed...”

Bryce

STOP PRESS: So impressed was Judy Dyke (Tyndallwoods Solicitors) by the ‘Wow!’ factor on her first visit to St Alban the Martyr (for the organ recital on Saturday 25th April given by our former organ scholar Keith Dale), and particularly by the Bunce Reredos, that, as a Trustee of the Limoges Trust, she has committed to giving the organ fund £2,500 to assist in covering the urgent repairs required to the contact blocks. Together with the matched funding by a generous donor, this means that we have the £5,000 necessary to begin this work on the proposed date 5th June, after Corpus Christi on 4 June. The work will take two weeks to complete and will be undertaken at the organ builder’s workshop. Which in turn means that we will be without organ Sundays 7th and 14th June, with everything fully operational for our Patronal and visit from +Rowan Williams on Saturday 27th June, DV... *Bryce*

The Choir and the Organ in the mid-1880s

From our Magazine in August 1884: THE CHOIR.

From the beginning of the Mission Work in 1865, S. Alban’s has always had a Voluntary Choir of Communicants. Manuals used: Helmore’s Psalter and Canticles; Hymns Ancient and Modern. “Services” for Canticles, morning and evening on Sundays. Choral Celebration of Holy Communion every Sunday at 11. Choral Evensong every Week-day at 8. Full Practice of Choir on Fridays at 9 p.m. The Choir Rules have recently been revised and printed.

Choir Master and Organist.— Douglas Redman, A.R.A., 137, Varna Road.

I wonder how many of the choir sang for evensong every weekday — and what the Choir Rules were then.

And from May 1885: ORGAN FUND.

The Organ has not been paid for: the money was advanced by the Churchwardens. The sum of £412 12s. 10d., cost and other expenses of Organ, should therefore be deducted from the Warden's adverse balance of £456 5s. 9d., leaving due to the Wardens on the ordinary Church Account the sum of £42 12s. 11d., and a sum of £412 12s. 10d. on the Organ Fund. On the motion of Mr. Shore at the Annual Meeting on April 23, it was unanimously agreed to make special efforts to pay for the Organ.

This debt for the organ was no mean sum — £412 then had purchasing power like that of £65,000 today. The churchwardens then were William Henry Sproston and Howard Taylor Ratcliff, both major financial supporters of St Alban's church. Mr Sproston was a surgeon, while Howard was a successful brass founder, recorded in the 1881 census as employing 98 men, 56 boys and 32 women. Today we are raising about £100,000 to refurbish the organ, but the present churchwardens are not able to underwrite the work!

Chris Smith

**ST AGATHA'S CHURCH, STRATFORD ROAD,
SPARKBROOK, BIRMINGHAM**

SATURDAY 27TH JUNE 2026 AT 3.00PM

LAUNCH OF

BISHOP BARNES

AND THE ANGLO-CATHOLICS IN BIRMINGHAM

1924 – 53

by Michael Yelton

published by the Anglo-Catholic History Society

This important new book tells for the first time the full story of the notorious campaign against Anglo-Catholicism waged by Bishop Barnes while he was Bishop of Birmingham and is extensively illustrated. It makes full use of Barnes' extensive archive and deals with all the churches involved, many of which are no longer in existence, relying in many cases on original correspondence. It also analyses the long-term effects of Barnes' campaign. Father Rosenthal, the vicar of St Agatha, was leader of the resistance to Barnes, so the launch will be at an appropriate location.

The cost of the book at the launch will be £15.

If you cannot attend the launch, postal orders should be sent to Michael Yelton at 211, Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 8RN and cheques made out to the Anglo-Catholic History Society. Alternatively, and preferably, you can pay by direct transfer to the Society's bank account (the name of the account is that of the Society: sort code 09 01 55 and account number 06043088). If you pay that way you can order by email to michaelyelton@achs.org.uk The cost inclusive of postage is £17, £30 for two copies.

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 year's 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.

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!

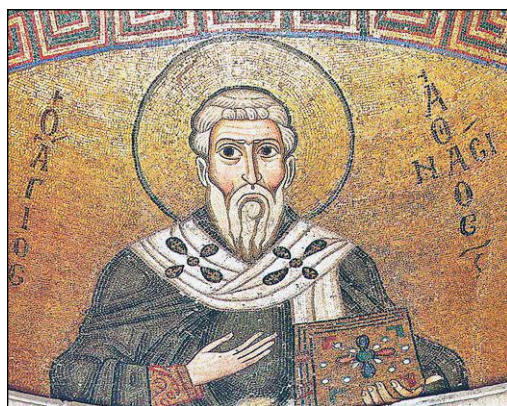
Angela Sones, Director of Music

The Church's Year — May 2026

On Friday May 1st, we enter the “*merrie month of May*”, famous in song and literature — surely the quintessential month of Spring! — and today we celebrate the Apostles St Philip and St James. We can remember our Cathedral especially in our prayers on this day, since it is of course dedicated to St Philip the Apostle (something



I always stress when celebrating there, since, as I have said before, he has been confused with Philip the Evangelist who occurs in the Acts of the Apostles and who is obviously a completely different person). Philip occurs prominently in the first chapter of St John's Gospel, since he was one of the first to have been called by Jesus to be his disciple, whereupon he went and brought Nathanael (usually identified with St Bartholomew) to Jesus. The James with whom Philip on this day is associated is not to be confused with James, the brother of John and one of the sons of Zebedee, but is sometimes referred to as James, the son of Alphaeus, or James the Less (which seems to me a bit unfair, since spiritually he might have been just as great a character as the more prominent James). We know virtually nothing about him — but it's enough to know that he was called by Jesus to be one of his apostles and that he responded.

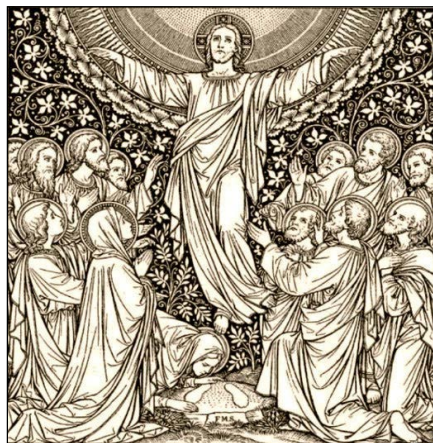


The next day, Saturday May 2nd is a Lesser Festival and the Feast of St Athanasius, the bishop of Alexandria in the fourth century. He is, deservedly, one of the most famous figures in the history of the Church since in his time the Church — just free from the threat of persecutions, as mentioned above — was beset by one of the most dangerous of all heresies, that of Arianism. This taught that Christ was not truly equal to the Father but “*the first of all created beings*”. This is not just abstruse theology but cuts at the very basis of

Christianity and this teaching was decisively refuted by the great Council of Nicaea of 325 (the 1,700th anniversary of which we celebrated last year), called by the Christian Emperor Constantine, which also issued the first format of what we fittingly call the Nicene Creed, customarily proclaimed at services of Holy Communion. This contains the essential words that Christ was of the “*same substance*” as the Father (or “*consubstantial with the Father*”) which means fully equal to the Father. However, Arianism continued to rage throughout much of the fourth

century, and Athanasius was its most redoubtable adversary — and eventually prevailed. Had it not been for him, you and I might never have heard of the Christian faith, because, probably, despite having survived the terrible persecutions of the first three centuries, it might not have survived this still more dangerous threat from within its very ranks. Five times Athanasius was exiled from his see of Alexandria, but he was able eventually to return finally and was able to die in post in 373.

Thursday May14th, exactly forty days after Easter Day, is Ascension Day, the day on which, as we read in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, Jesus finally departed in visible form from his disciples to return to his Father. This is an important day in the Christian year — indeed in Germany it is a national holiday — and a day on which every Christian should attempt to be in church to celebrate the Ascension. It is permitted to transfer the celebration to the following Sunday, as some churches do. Jesus' ministry on this earth was complete — the work was now handed on to his disciples who were assured of his continual presence through the Holy Spirit, which, he promised them, they would shortly receive.

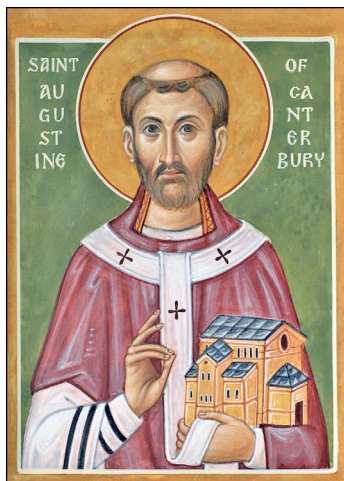


The Abbey of St Matthias in Trier

a monk who was sent by Pope Gregory with several companions to convert the wild British tribes to Christianity, since, after the departure of the Romans at the beginning of the fifth century, the Christian faith had rather languished in the meantime. He landed in Kent in 597 — a significant date in British history — and was welcomed by the king of Wessex who lived at Canterbury — hence Canterbury, not London, becoming the headquarters of the

May 14th is also the Feast Day of Matthias the Apostle, whose day therefore, because that day is in this year also Ascension Day, is officially transferred to the following day, Friday May15th. Matthias was the apostle chosen by the other apostles to take the place of the traitor Judas Iscariot, as we read in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. As I have said before, his body is believed to lie in a magnificent tomb in the Abbey of St Matthias, a Benedictine Abbey in Trier, on the beautiful river Moselle in Germany. I was privileged to spend a few days there during my student days in Germany.

On Tuesday May 26th, we have a Lesser Festival of St Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 605 (not to be confused with Augustine of Hippo, who lived two centuries earlier in the days of the Roman Empire and who is the author of the famous Confessions). This Augustine was a



Church in Britain. Thanks to the success of his mission this date of 597 is generally taken to be the beginning of an unbroken succession of Christian tradition in this country. As David Edwards has rightly said in his study of Christianity in Britain, the Christian faith has been the single most powerful influence in the formation of our country's history. It was eventually the religious unity of Britain which helped forward its political unity — and all this goes back to that momentous date of 597.

At the very end of the month, on Sunday May 31st we celebrate Trinity Sunday. May 31st is usually the day on which we celebrate the visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth, but, because this year

May 31st is Trinity Sunday, that Festival is transferred to the following day, Monday June 1st. Trinity Sunday marks the end of the first half of the Christian year, with the celebration of the foundational doctrine of the Christian Faith, the belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It also marks the beginning of the second half, therefore, of the Christian year, in which we concentrate on the teachings of the Church, going up to the First Sunday of Advent (November 29th). Trinity Sunday is a kind of summing up of all that has gone before in the Church's year, in which we were concentrating chiefly on the historical aspects of the Incarnation of Jesus, from the time of John the Baptist to his Ascension. Throughout this time, we saw the working of the “Three Persons and One



God” of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. What we understand by this is the purpose of the coming months to Advent to work out. May we bend our minds and spirits valiantly to that task! The doctrine (that rather forbidding word! but it simply means “teaching” — and, surely, we shouldn’t flinch from that!) of the Holy Trinity is, to my mind, wonderfully summarised in the so-called Athanasian Creed, to be found in the Book of Common Prayer but not, alas!, in the Common Worship book. I cannot resist pointing out yet again that about seven years ago I recited the whole of this wonderful creed by

heart from the pulpit of St Paul’s church in the Jewellery Quarter of Birmingham, with a commentary, on Trinity Sunday (when it is supposed in any case to be recited) and have not been invited back to preach in that church ever since! Perhaps they haven’t yet recovered from the shock of hearing this long creed in its entirety!

Fr Andrew

Calendar for May 2026

1st	Friday	Weekday of Easter (<i>Ss Philip and James</i>)
2nd	Saturday	St Athansius, B, Dr
3rd	Sunday	5th of Sunday of Easter
4th	Monday	English Saints and Martyrs of the Reformation Era
5th	Tuesday	Weekday of Easter (<i>St Asaph, B</i>)
6th	Wednesday	Weekday of Easter
7th	Thursday	Weekday of Easter
8th	Friday	St Julian of Norwich
9th	Saturday	Weekday of Easter
10th	Sunday	6th Sunday of Easter
11th	Monday	Weekday of Easter
12th	Tuesday	Weekday of Easter (<i>Ss Nereus and Achilleus, Mrr; S Pancras, Mr</i>)
13th	Wednesday	Weekday of Easter (<i>Our Lady of Fatima</i>)
14th	Thursday	The Ascension of the Lord
15th	Friday	St Matthias (<i>Transferred</i>)
16th	Saturday	Weekday of Easter
17th	Sunday	7th Sunday of Easter
18th	Monday	Weekday of Easter (<i>S John, Pope, Mr</i>)
19th	Tuesday	Weekday of Easter (<i>St Dunstan, B</i>)
20th	Wednesday	Alcuin, R
21st	Thursday	Weekday of Easter
22nd	Friday	Weekday of Easter (<i>St Rita of Cascia, R</i>)
23rd	Saturday	Weekday of Easter
24th	Sunday	Pentecost (Whit Sunday)
25th	Monday	The Venerable Bede Dr
26th	Tuesday	St Philip Neri, Pr
27th	Wednesday	St Augustine of Canterbury, B
28th	Thursday	Feria
29th	Friday	Feria (<i>St Paul VI, Pope</i>)
30th	Saturday	Feria
31st	Sunday	The Most Holy Trinity

Music in St Alban's for May 2026

Sunday 3rd — 5th Sunday of Easter — 10.00 a.m.

Mass setting: Harold Darke in F

Hymns: 333 All my hope on God is founded
205 Christ is made the sure foundation
374 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
113 Love's redeeming work is done

Anthem: Greater Love — John Ireland

Voluntary: Allegro from Symphony No.2 — Louis Vierne

Sunday 10th — 6th Sunday of Easter — 10.00 a.m.

Mass setting: Mass setting: Anglican Folk Mass — Martin Shaw

Hymns: 139 Come, thou Holy Spirit, come
420 O Jesus, I have promised
341 Blest are the pure in heart
439 Praise to the Holiest in the height (Tü)

Anthem: If ye love me — Thomas Tallis

Voluntary: Fugue in E minor (The Wedge) BWV 548 — J.S. Bach

Thursday 14th — Ascension of the Lord — 7.30 p.m.

Mass setting: Mass of the Quiet Hour — George Oldroyd

Hymns: 130 Hail the day that sees him rise (Ti)
Christ triumphant, ever reigning (sheet)
349 Come, let us join our cheerful songs
134 The head that once was crowned with thorns

Anthem: God is gone up — Gerald Finzi

Voluntary: March (from 'Three pieces for Organ') — Nicholas Choveaux

Organist: *Kevin Gill*

Sunday 17th — 7th Sunday of Easter — 10.00 a.m.

Mass setting: Mass setting: White in E♭

Hymns: 332 All hail the power of Jesu's name
296 Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour (Ti)
302 O Thou, who at thy Eucharist didst pray
443 Rejoice, the Lord is King

Anthem: Lead me Lord — Wesley

Voluntary: Sortie in B♭ — Louis Lefébure-Wély

Sunday 24th — Pentecost (Whit Sunday) — 10.00 a.m.

Mass setting: Messe cum Jubilo — Maurice Duruflé

Hymns: 138 Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire
137 Come down, O Love Divine
302 O Thou who at the Eucharist didst pray
139 Come, thou Holy Spirit, come (Ti)

Anthem: Sequence ‘Veni Sancte Spiritus’ (Liber Usualis p. 880)

Voluntary: Meditation VI (from the Méditations sur le Mystère de la Sainte Trinité) — Olivier Messiaen

Pearson Church Organist: Iain Simcock

Sunday 24th — Solemn Choral Evensong & Benediction 6.00 p.m.

Regina Coeli

Responses: Plainsong Psalms: 67, 133

Canticles: Watson in E

Hymns: 431 O Thou who camest from above
342 Breathe on me, breath of God

Anthem: Veni Creator Spiritus (Liber Usualis p. 885)

Voluntary: Veni Creator (last variation) — Maurice Duruflé

Pearson Church Organist: Iain Simcock

Sunday 31st — The Most Holy Trinity — 10.00 a.m.

Mass setting: Sumsion in F

Hymns: 146 Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God almighty
148 The God of Abraham praise (omit * verses 2, 3, 5)
358 Father of heaven, whose love profound (Tii)
373 How shall I sing that majesty (T Coe Fen)

Anthem: Hymn to the Trinity — Tchaikovsky

Voluntary: Fugue in Eb (St Ann) BWV 552 — J.S. Bach

Marian Anthem — Regina Coeli throughout Easter
Angelus from Trinity Sunday

Choir rehearsals: Thursdays, 7.15 pm; (except on **Fridays** May 8th and 15th)
Sundays, 9.00 am; Thursday 14th, 6.30 pm; Sunday 24th, SCE&B 4.30 pm.

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

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