





Immaculate Heart of Mary, Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH February 2025

Dear All,

Here's a worrying timeline...

January 7th 2025: Wildfires Break Out in Los Angeles

On the 7th January, news broke of the devastating wildfires sweeping through Los Angeles. We heard harrowing testimony from people who had lost loved ones, homes and livelihoods. People on the ground described what they were seeing as apocalyptic.

According to the BBC website, the fires could turn out to be the costliest in US history, with damage projected at up to \$150bn. The overall destruction is immense, with thousands of buildings destroyed.

January 17th 2025: Greenhouse Gases Reach New High

On January 17th, we heard that levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere had reached a new high. Carbon Dioxide is one of the most powerful greenhouse gases. Pumped into the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuels, it acts like a blanket. It traps heat that would normally escape into space, increasing the earth's temperature. This global warming is having devastating consequences. Droughts, flooding, heatwaves and wildfires are affecting many parts of the planet.

Carbon dioxide is measures in parts per million (ppm). Scientists reckon that the safe level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is 353ppm. We passed that point in 1988, and levels have continued to rise.

The new high reported on January 17th was of a catastrophic 424ppm (and still rising).

January 20th 2025: Trump Takes US out of Paris Agreement
The Paris Agreement was reached at the UN Climate Change
Conference in December 2015. A legally binding international
treaty on climate change, its aim is 'to hold the increase in the
global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial
levels, and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C
above pre-industrial levels.'

Trump's decision to take the US out of this global treaty, announced to triumphant cheering from his supporters, is a disgrace. According to the website 'Carbon Brief' the US is responsible for the largest share of historical emissions – some 20% of the global total. The rich lifestyle of many of its citizens is having a terrible impact on other parts of the world which have done next to nothing to create the problem.

It's quite a timeline, in thirteen days. And we can join the dots. The high level of carbon dioxide is driving the climate emergency. US government research is clear in linking climate change to larger and more severe wildfires in the western US. Yet rather than pulling together with the rest of humanity in addressing the problem, Trump has walked away – even announcing his determination to 'drill, baby, drill' for more fossil fuels.

It can all feel so big, and so far away. Yet all of us have a responsibility to raise our voice. If you're a member of St Alban's or St John's reading this, please consider coming forward as our Parish Environment Champion.

And we can write to our MP. If we don't, how will they know what we think? Write to Alan Campbell (alan.campbell.mp@parliament.uk). Tell him you're worried about the climate crisis. Tell him that, as his constituent, you are happy for our government to do whatever it takes to get us off fossil fuels.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Tim Mayfield

The devastating wildfire in Los Angeles



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If our clients or their families are feeling unwell, cannot manage or just have no time, they ring us and we can help. We have popped in to see clients to change light bulbs, take pets to the vets, and pick up shopping. We have accompanied clients to hospital/doctors, walked dogs, called plumbers/electricians, mobile hairdressers and arranged to have bins emptied and rubbish removed. Just to mention a few of the things we have done for our clients. Anything clients need doing (within health & safety guidelines), we will do our best to help. Our services can be increased or decreased according to changes in circumstances.

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The First Flush – dedicating St Alban's new facilities

St Alban's hosted a special celebration service on Sunday January 12th. 'The First Flush' was the culmination of a five-year journey providing new facilities for the 1837 building.

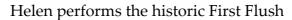
Geordies call toilets 'the netty'. St Alban's had never had toilets. So when Helen Jackman jokingly called it 'The Netty Project' the name stuck. Then the project grew, to embrace ramped access, two toilets (one of them fully accessible), babychange facilities, a simplified entrance, and a kitchen. A Media Room completed the suite of new-build, for the better enabling of livestreamed services.

Architect Tristan Spicer of Doonan Architects in Hexham drew St Alban's nine increasingly ambitious schemes. Treasurer Rob Swindells held out for the most ambitious of these, which was built by Northern Construction Solutions (NCS) Ltd, of Durham. Mr Spicer, and Project Manager Gary Singleton of NCS joined the St Alban's congregation for the big opening.

'The First Flush' had to feature an actual flushing. So during the service the congregation piled to the back of church. Then Helen, who had coined the phrase 'Netty Project', performed the historic flushing to cheers and applause.

Revd Tim said he was thrilled. 'The project has done exactly as we hoped', he said, 'making St Alban's a much improved base for mission. A few days before the grand opening, we had a busy baptism. It was lovely to see buggies rolling smoothly up the beautiful ramp. During the service, young families came and went to the Netty, and used the babychange facilities. Above the font is a beautiful 'halo' lighting fitting. It was special to stand under that, and baptise Harriet. Meanwhile, you never know some benefits until people actually start using a place. We had cleared three pews on either side of the centre aisle, turning two of them round to create a welcome area. Five or six buggies were parked in that space, and young parents sat on the 'reverse pews' feeding their babies before the service'.

St Alban's is now looking forward to exploring all the possibilities the new facilities afford.





More from the First Flush service...

Janet oiling the wheels in the new Welcome Area



Margaret on the new ramp





Joanne and Dorel serving prosecco from the new kitchen

Left to right: Tracey Singleton; Gary Singleton of NCS (Project Manager); Architect Tristan Spicer; vicar Tim Mayfield



Sunday 2nd to Tuesday 11th February 2025.

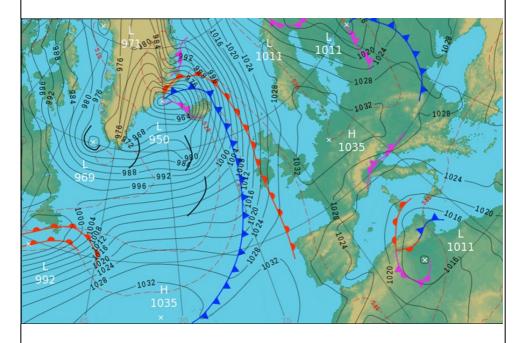
Periods of wet weather are likely to affect the northeast of the UK at times, particularly early in this period. Some heavy rain is possible and this is will probably be accompanied by spells of strong winds. South of our area and across the rest of the UK, it is likely to be more settled, whilst some rain cannot be ruled out at times throughout the country. There may be plenty of dry weather throughout this period overall. In between transiting Atlantic weather systems - winds will be lighter and this will bring the risk of overnight frost and fog. Brief colder spells are likely in between the weather systems. Overall, temperatures will be close to normal for most of the country, however, it may be milder at times in the northeast.

Wednesday 12th to Wednesday 26th February 2025.

There are signs that there may be a northwest-southeast split to the UK's weather throughout this period.

The northeast and the northwest including areas further north are likely to bear the brunt of wet and windy spells, whilst towards the south or southeast, it may be drier and more settled. Some rain is still possible at times, as are brief drier spells further north including the northeast. Temperatures will probably be close to average in the northeast, some milder spells are likely, especially in the north including our region. Overall brief colder spells are possible in between the transient weather systems.

North Atlantic Surface Pressure Chart Prediction for 12:00 hrs (UTC) on Saturday $1^{\rm st}$ February 2025.



David Gibson

DAVID ROBSON PAINTER & DECORATOR

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CHURCH VIEWS FOR FEBRUARY 2025 FROM THE PARISH OF OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA

Jubilee Year 2025



"In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future will bring."

These are the words of Pope Francis as he declared 2025 to be the latest Jubilee Year. He opened the 'Holy Door' of St Peter's in the Vatican on Christmas Eve and then of St John Lateran, the Cathedral of Rome, on the Feast of the Holy Family on 29 December 2024. Every Catholic cathedral in the world has now opened its Holy Door, which will remain open until the Epiphany on 6 January 2026.



Tales are legion of the struggles of joiners and stonemasons to open the vast Holy Doors in the great European cathedrals of Notre Dame, Rheims, and Milan when Jubilee Years occurred only once every century.

Fortunately Bishop Stephen did not encounter any such problems when he opened the Holy Door in St Mary's Cathedral, and you may make your own Pilgrimage of Hope through it from the cathedral courtyard, not the main doors on Clayton Street.

Daily Mass is at 12.05pm, but in the Cathedral you can also explore the Catholic contribution to our local history, or simply take time out to enjoy a place of quiet in your busy life.

St Edmund Room

Although our much-loved church of Our Lady and St Edmund in Backworth has been closed, its important heritage is being recognised in Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Upper Room, used for so many meetings and gatherings, particularly the frequent Children's Liturgy during our Vigil Mass, is to be re-named St Edmund Room. This Backworth altar crucifix will be mounted there, having been carefully renovated and the toll of seventy years removed. Twelve large framed photographs showing events in the history of Our Lady and St Edmund's,



from the first Iron Church in 1884 to the current building, will be displayed there too. The altar candlesticks seen here are destined for another of our churches, as is the magnificent later altar. The processional cross and altar bells, originally donated by the Coyle family, are already in use at Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Getting back to normal.....

Our usual parish events are returning to normal: the Walking Group will step out on Mondays 3 (Durham City area) and 17 February; Luncheon Club will serve again on Thursday 27 February, and Food Bank donations can be made on Mondays at Immaculate Heart of Mary from 10.00am.

.....and a thought to take forward.

"Throw open the doors of your heart. Everyone knows how to do it. Everyone knows whether their door is closed or half closed. The Holy Door is open, it is wide openlet us be reconciled with ourselves and able to be reconciled with one another, even our enemies." Pope Francis

Gerry Latimer, Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea

Parish Mass Times:

St Edward's: Sunday 9.30am, Tuesday and Friday 9.30am Immaculate Heart of Mary: Saturday 6.00pm, Wed 9.30am

St Mary's: Sunday 11.00am, Thursday 10.00am St Oswin's: Sunday 9.30am, Tuesday 10.00am Saturday 18th January 2025

Pearl went to see Sleeping Beauty at Whitley Bay Playhouse, and met up with Lucy, in the foyer afterwards!

I've heard that Lucy was absolutely incredible.

A lot of St Alban's congregation will remember Lucy growing up around her father's services when Andrew France was the vicar.



* If you have any suggestions, comments or requests

* regarding the magazine, or for anyone thinking of

* sending in their contribution for publication, please

* email it to magazine@StAlbansEarsdon.org.uk

* or call Jean on 0191 2377273.

Thank you.

Church Views magazine email: magazine@stalbansearsdon.org.uk

Happy Valentine's Day



Date for your Diary ...

Saturday, 1st March: 7.00pm at the Eccles Hall, Earsdon; the traditional and now famous Pancake and Quiz Night.

This is such an enjoyable evening, with delicious pancakes, a raffle, and Craig's clever quiz.

Tickets are £6.00 and are available at the back of St Alban's church along with a seating plan, or contact Joan on 0191 2529239.



Anna Chaplains going Great Guns

In February 2024, Ali Griffiths and Liz York were commissioned as 'Anna Chaplains'. Named after the elderly prophetess in Luke's Gospel, Anna Chaplains are trained to accompany older people on their spiritual journey.

A year on, and in readiness for their re-commissioning on February 2nd, Liz and Ali met with vicar Tim Mayfield to review their ministry. There is much to celebrate.

Wearing their brand-new Anna chaplain lanyards, Ali and Liz visited **Havelock Place**. This is a brand new facility in Backworth catering for people with dementia. From that initial visit has grown a regular sequence of activities. Guests paint, at table-top easels. And a highlight of the morning is shared communion. Liz leads these services, and then distributes the bread. Ali follows with the wine.

Ali remembers a sleepless night before their first activity morning at Havelock Place, but then a sense of euphoria that things had gone so well. He and Liz went straight to Backworth Club for a celebratory drink.

Meanwhile, in Earsdon, the Eccles Hall hosts 'Craft, Coffee and Communion'. Guests enjoy chatting together as they design and colour in greetings cards. And communion is a highlight, just as at Havelock Place. On Tuesday January 14th Alison, Joyce, Lilian, Pat, Pauline, Pearl, were nourished with the bread and wine.

Completing a trio of locations, Liz works alongside vicar Tim and Pearl in leading monthly 'Hymns and Prayers' at **Earsdon Grange** Care Home. It's lovely that Pearl has a regular opportunity to contribute to these occasions, often reading her own poetry.

One of the many good things about Liz and Ali's first year in post is the way in which their Anna work has drawn in other helpers. Linda Reynolds and Janet Sigley work as 'Anna Friends' alongside Liz and Ali. It will be lovely to see how this work continues to develop into the future.

Joyce enjoying 'Craft, Coffee and Communion'



Pat with her Easter Card at 'Craft, Coffee and Communion'



Communion at Havelock Place



The Burns Supper: a celebration of the Immortal Memory

Burns night fell on a Saturday so for once our celebration took place on the 25th of January which is, 'Burns night'.

This year at the Eccles Hall we mixed it up a little, so after the Selkirk Grace and broth, we were treated to some real Scottish dancing. Alice (Gowdy) gave a very polished performance of a Scottish Lilt, a dance which was performed by ladies in bygone days to show how graceful they were.

Joan retold the story of the life of Robert (Rabbie) Burns and proposed the toast in his immortal memory.

Paul Gowdy then gave the address to the haggis which is something not to be missed. A speech which is long, complex, incomprehensible but above all word perfect. He did a brilliant job of honouring that great pudding, the haggis. This was followed by an important toast to the haggis.

Alice then gave another performance, this time a jig. The jig has a story attached to it and is supposedly the reaction of a wife to an errant husband dirtying her clean kitchen floor. In the movement there was plenty of stamping feet and punches thrown.

Then came the food which as usual was particularly good with home made broth, haggis, neeps and tatties followed by cranachan, coffee and shortbread.

A big thank you to everyone who helped to put on a spectacular evening.

Rob Gowdy



St. Alban's and St. John's Diary Page for February 2025

Sunday	2nd		<u>Candlemas</u> Special Service for Candlemas, with the re-commissioning of Anna Chaplains Ali and Liz			
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's		
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's		
Thursday	6th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's		
Sunday	9th	Fourth Sunday before Lent				
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's		
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's		
Wednesday	12th	NO MIDWEEK COMMUNION—TIM IN TANZANIA				
Sunday	16th	Third Sunday before Lent				
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's		
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's		
Thursday	20th	NO MIDWEEK COMMUNION—TIM IN TANZANIA				
Sunday	23rd	Second Sunday before Lent				
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's		
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's		
Wednesday	26th	NO MIDWEEK COMMUNION— TIM IN TANZANIA				
Sunday	2nd		Sunday Next before Lent			
	March	9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's		
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's		

St. Alban's and St. John's

Sunday Gospel Readings for February 2025:

2nd	9th	16th	
Luke 2.22-40	Luke 5.1-11	Luke 6.17-26	

23rd 2nd March Luke 8.22-25 Luke 9.28-36

Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent, falls on March 5th. There will be acts of worship at both St Alban's Earsdon (9.30am) and St John's Backworth (7.30pm). Both will feature the offer of receiving the sign of the cross in ash for those who would value it. 'The imposition of ashes' is a picture in the Bible of sorrow for sin. People kneel at the communion rail, and the cross is traced on their forehead with ash. As we do so, we use these ancient words: 'Remember that you are dust, and that to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin, and be faithful to Christ'.

On behalf of everyone at St Alban's and St John's we wish you a deep, rich journey through Lent.



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Complete the 9x9 grid with digits so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3×3 blocks contains all of the digits from 1 to 9.

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8			5				7	2
		9	2	4		3		
	5							
		3	7	1	5	2		
							5	
		8		7	9	5		
2	9				6			8
	3		31	2		7		

Please note - all material for next month's magazine (March 2025) will need to be in before Wednesday 26th February. Thank you, *Jean*.





All in the month of February

It was ...

175 years ago, on 23rd Feb 1850 that Cesar Ritz, the Swiss hotelier, was born. He founded several notable hotels including the Ritz and Carlton Hotels in London, and the Hotel Ritz in Paris.

125 years ago, on 27th Feb 1900 that the Labour Party was founded in the UK.

90 years ago, on 22nd Feb 1935 that US President Franklin D Roosevelt banned aircraft from flying over the White House – because the noise kept him awake at night. The ban remains in place today, but mainly now for security reasons.

80 years ago, during Feb 1945 that Anne Frank died. The young Dutch Jewish diarist and Holocaust victim died in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp at the age of 15, probably from typhus.

Also 80 years ago, on 6th Feb 1945 that Bob Marley, the Jamaican reggae/ska/rock steady singer, songwriter was born. He became a

musician and cultural icon (died 1981).

Also 80 years ago, on 13th to 15th Feb 1945 that the bombing of Dresden took place. The Allies carried out four massive bombing raids, completely destroying the inner city, and killing about 25,000 people.

Also 80 years ago, on 19th Feb to 26th Mar 1945 that the Battle of Iwo Jima, Japanese volcanic islands, took place. The iconic photo of US Marines triumphantly rising the American flag on top of Mount Surabachi was taken on 23td Feb.

Also 80 years ago, on 21st Feb 1945 that Eric Liddell, Scottish athlete, died. An Olympic gold medallist in 1924 (400 m), he had withdrawn from the 100m heat because it was held on a Sunday and entered the 400 m instead. The story is featured in the film *Chariots of Fire*. (Liddell died in a WWII internment camp in China, aged 43.)

20 years ago, on 14th Feb 2005 that YouTube, the online video-sharing service, was founded. It was purchased by Google in 2006.

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WORDSEARCH February 2025

February opens with Candlemas – the naming of Jesus in the temple. Simeon and Anna praised God to see the promised Messiah, sent by a loving God to save his people. February also celebrates the love between couples: Valentine cards and wedding fayres abound. 'Love' as in social compassion is also remembered: Fair Trade fortnight, Holocaust Memorial Day, World Leprosy Day, Education Sunday and National Nest Box Week.... Love is truly needed by everyone!

naming Christ Candlemas Simeon Anna temple love Valentine romance Matthias Fairtrade Fortnight coffee bananas chocolate justice poverty nest box marriage wedding Holocaust leprosy education

sunday

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