



A New Year Message from Fr Francis – January 2024

Dear St Bart's Parishioners and all our visitors,

2023 was a busy year for the Parish. We continued to make progress in our Parish mission "Evangelisation" - proclaiming the good news of God's love throughout the world by our actions.

We have welcomed new families in our midst and have sadly said "farewell" to some of our longstanding parishioners and friends RIP.

We set up a new Liturgy team and, working with existing parish groups and volunteers from across St Bart's, we have built upon several important spiritual and social opportunities. These involved our parishioners with new ministers for essential ministries, our local community, engaging with our Youth and St Adrian's school with specific, regular Masses and our weekly Children's Liturgy. Our free, Monday soup lunch (after 12.00 pm Mass) has some 20 guests attending this weekly social. The monthly afternoon "Circle of Friends" social a relaxed social event, open to all. Our SVP group undertakes important work among our community.

Our annual parish HCPT pilgrimage to Lourdes took place in April after essential fundraising via our regular jumble sales, Golf Day event and carol singing. St Bart's Pantry has expanded as has our involvement with the Asylum Seekers residing locally. This includes weekly English language classes, providing bikes, bike training and support for Home Office interviews. Our new church heating system was installed along with cavity wall insulation and the entire electrical board system was replaced.

As we look forward to 2024 and pull together our plans, a summary of 2023 is outlined below (this is non exhaustive as many other things happened, too). Your ideas are always welcome- just speak with a member of the PPC or myself or write/email.

I recognise and value the talents, support, commitment and generosity that you bring to our parish and I thank you all from the bottom of my heart. Wishing you all a blessed year in 2024. Fr Francis

Overview of 2023 at St Bart's

January

- Christian Unity Candle Exchange, with South St Albans Churches.
- Christmas party for Circle of Friends.

February

- Cake Bake
- Family Focused Mass

March

- Ecumenical Lent Groups 2023

April

- Good Friday Walk of Witness and Unity at the Cross
- HCPT Lourdes – 8 children and their helpers in a successful (and wet) trip to Lourdes
- Adopt a Plant - free plants given out after masses to parishioners and the community

May

- Jumble Sale (raising funds for HCPT)
- Parish "Welcome" booklet updated and issued (including online via parish website)

June

- Participation in Sopwell "Larks in the Park" charity event
- South St Albans Churches Tree Planting in Chiswell Green Community garden
- Participation in Alban Pilgrimage
- Family Focused Mass

July

- Flower Festival and Tea Party (fundraising for flowers)

August

- Novena for St Bartholomew
- We welcomed our new, part-time, Deacon, Anthony Curran

September

- Fair Trade lunch and social event (fundraising for Pax Christi & Asylum seekers)
- Cake Bake (raising funds for Parish heating system)
- Pilgrimage to Walsingham jointly with St Albans and St Stephen's
- Jumble Sale (raising funds for HCPT)
- Participated in Churches together St Albans Prayer Walk
- Relaunched 200 club

October

- Auction (raising funds for Parish heating system)

November

- Candlelight Service of Remembrance and weekly Remembrance candles start
- Advent Groups 2023
- Bingo Social event held at St Albans and St Stephens (raising funds for Parish heating system)
- Multi-cultural meal for the Asylum Seekers

December

- Parish Retreat led by Father Peter
- Wreath making event (raising funds for parish flowers)
- Festive Fair (raising funds for Parish heating)
- Christmas Party for Circle of Friends
- Christmas Eve 4 pm Mass for Children involving nativity scenes followed by refreshments in the hall
- 2 x Youth Masses
- Carol Singing to raise funds for HCPT
- 120 Christmas gifts from South St Albans Churches and the Cathedral given to local asylum seekers
- Joined with Churches Together to sign cards for prisoners at the Mount Prison

Looking forward to 2024 – our plans linked to the Liturgical Calendar being prepared

- 21 January Christian Unity (marked by an exchange of candles)
- 20 January Jumble Sale
- 28 January Cake Bake (raising funds for Parish heating system)
- 27 April Latin American Evening with food and dancing (for Parish heating system)