

The Newsletter of the parishes of



St. Alban at Pelaw



St. Patrick at Felling



Our School

www.stalbangateshead.org

In Gateshead in the week 7th to 13th Dec there were 837 recorded cases, which was an increase of 39 from the previous week. This equates to 414 cases per 100,000 people. The average area in England had 559 cases over the same period.

Fourth Sunday of Advent
19th December, 2021

**We need everyone to
keep Gateshead safe**

**Covid-19 protection measures remain
in place in our Church for your safety**

Dear Parishioners

I hope you are able to look forward to Christmas and to celebrate it with friends and family in a cautious, caring and loving way.

I would like to extend an invitation to you to join us for Mass in St. Patrick's Church on either Christmas Eve at 17.30 or on Christmas Day at 9.45. Unfortunately, due to the current restrictions, we will not be able to sing the usual carols during Mass.

On both occasions the Church will open 20 minutes before Mass is due to begin. Please do not all arrive in the last five minutes to avoid the need to queue as you wait to be taken to your seats!! Access to the Church is by the entrance off Church Street only - "the Top Door."

As we are not operating a booking system this year, it would be helpful if some of you who have in the past attended on Christmas Eve would consider coming on Christmas morning to ensure that we can welcome everyone in a safe way at both Masses. It would also prevent us from having to turn people away if our capacity is reached.

We will continue to do all we can to ensure St. Patrick's Church is both welcoming and as Covid safe as we can make it for you. You will be invited to sanitise your hands when you arrive and will be guided to your places by one of our volunteer stewards. Face coverings are a legal requirement unless you are medically exempt.

You are asked to maintain one metre social distancing from others in your bench, unless you are from the same household or bubble. You are also asked not to move around the Church once seated.

We are encouraged to collect test and trace details - your name and a contact telephone number - so please bring them along in an envelope and place it in the box at the front of the church or use the QR code if you have a smartphone

As we must clean the church after each celebration, the rear of the church is closed to reduce the demands on our stewards who sanitise the benches after you leave. Limited toilet facilities are available in case of necessity. You are welcome to use the main Church car park, accessing the Church via the external stone steps at the side of the Church.

If you have [Covid-19 symptoms](#) or feel unwell, if you have a cough or are sneezing, if someone in your household has been poorly recently, please do not take any risks with your health or the health of others at Church and stay at home until you feel better. You can review what the Covid-19 symptoms are by clicking [here](#).

Remember too, if you are still hesitant about attending Church, you are under no obligation to do so.

It would be a wonderful act of kindness to one another if you would consider taking a lateral flow test before attending Mass on Christmas Eve and Christmas Morning. The choice, of course, is yours; you are under no obligation to do so. As you will be aware, it is often people who have contracted Covid-19, but experience no symptoms, who unknowingly infect others.

We have lived through a lot since the pandemic started so let us be kind and respect one another this Christmas. Be aware of personal space and personal choice. Some people might not be ready to hug, kiss, shake hands or reduce social distancing. Don't assume what people are comfortable with. Instead, ask them and respect their personal choices.



Please do all you can to be cautious in your everyday life choices which not only affect you, but impact on others too, including the NHS on which we all rely at times and pray for one another.

May God bless you and your families this Christmas.

Fv. Patterson.

Mass to view on line

Mass is live streamed from our Cathedral on Sunday at 11.30 and may be viewed on the [Cathedral website](#).

Alternatively, you may like to follow Mass from the [Holy Name, Jesmond](#). Visit the website for Mass times this week.

Mass Intentions

With the exception of Sunday, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, Fr. Patterson will celebrate Mass privately during the week remembering the following Intentions. *Face coverings must be worn when attending Church, unless you are medically exempt.*

Monday: William, Eileen, Bernadette & Liam Brannigan

Tuesday: Funeral Mass for Mary Smith - **by invitation - Covid restrictions apply**

Wednesday: Mary Robinson

Thursday: Jim Murray

Christmas Eve: 17.30 in St. Patrick's Church: The sick, their families, NHS staff & Care Workers and all who have died from Covid-19

Christmas Day: 09.45 in St. Patrick's Church: Fr. Patterson's intentions

Sunday, 26th December: 10.30 in St. Patrick's Church: For the intentions of all our parishioners

When you are unable to celebrate Mass in Church, you may wish to make this act of spiritual communion:-

Lord Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

Please keep in your prayers:

- all our parishioners who are sick, housebound or in hospital.
- all those near and dear to us whose memories we cherish at this time, especially Nellie Armstrong and Jim Murray
- and Mary Smith who has died. May she be taken up into glory to live with the Lord in eternal peace and joy.



Let us pray

Gracious God, as we remember before you the thousands who have died from the coronavirus, surround us and all who mourn with your compassion. Be gentle with us in our grief, protect us from despair and give us grace to persevere and face the future with hope. We make this prayer in Jesus Christ our risen Lord. Amen.



A Prayer for Carers, Nurses and Doctors

Lord Jesus, who healed the sick and gave them new life, be with doctors, nurses and carers, as they act as agents of your healing touch. In desperate times, keep them strong yet loving; and when their work is done, be with them in their weariness and in their tears. Amen.

A prayer for those who are afraid

God of all hope we call on you today.
We pray for those who are living in fear:
fear of Covid-19, fear for loved ones,
fear of what the future holds.
May your Spirit give us a sense of calmness and peace. Amen.



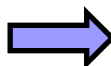
A prayer for Refugees

Father, your Son had no place to call his own;
protect those who today are fleeing from danger.
Bless those who work to bring them relief;
inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts;
and guide the nations of the world towards that day
when we will all rejoice in your Kingdom. Amen.

Your ongoing financial support is welcomed and needed

Fr. Patterson continues to be grateful for your offerings during these difficult times and is especially grateful to those parishioners who regularly contribute to parish funds by standing order helping us meet the regular financial commitments of our churches.

The details for standing orders and cheques are



You may bring your envelopes to Mass on Tuesdays or Sundays or drop them through the presbytery letterbox. **For security reason, envelopes should not be put through the letterbox of St. Alban's Presbytery.**

For St. Patrick's HSBC Bank
Account name: DHN Felling St Patrick
Sort code: 40-34-18
Account No: 52010453

For St. Alban's HSBC Bank
Account name: DHN Pelaw St Alban
Sort code: 40-34-18
Account No: 92010984

We journey on in hope.....with thanks and gratitude

One of the aspects that the pandemic has brought to the fore in the life of the church in our Diocese is the vulnerability of many of our priests either through age, with underlying health conditions or with a combination of both. This has resulted in many priests having to self isolate and has very much limited what they can do by way of their ministry.

None of us find it easy, and Fr. Patterson wishes to thank you all for your understanding of his personal situation in these times and for your reassurance, support and especially for your prayers. He is particularly grateful for the support and encouragement he receives from our volunteer stewards, who have helped him to make some difficult decisions during this time of pandemic.

He takes this opportunity to wish you all a most peaceful, happy and holy Christmas and hopes that you will keep safe and well in the months ahead.



Covid update from Bishop Robert

The Bishop writes:- "The emergence of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 presents a very significant risk to our clergy and congregations. Whilst the UK Government has kick started an accelerated vaccination programme, the devolved administrations and many experts believe that this alone is insufficient to counteract the very rapid increase in Covid-19 cases which is being driven by the much more transmissible Omicron variant.

Church services take place in a well-controlled environment if our guidelines are followed and I would like to remind you that it is vitally important that we all do everything we can to keep everyone safe. I set out the most pertinent Covid guidelines on 10th December but in addition I would ask that you **are sensitive to the duration of church services and encourage the congregation to disperse quickly at the end.** Whilst we are still able to safely gather in our churches the same is not true for our church halls and meeting spaces. ... I recommend that we close our church halls and meeting spaces, that are currently open, to all groups and activities at the end of Friday 17th December. They should remain closed until further notice."

In this last week of Advent you may find the following reflection of value:-

Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? (Luke 1: 39-45)

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'



What conversion of mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking of me?

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. When have I approached God in haste? When do I come in haste to the aid of my brothers and sisters?

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. How have I heard God speaking to me? How have I responded to God's voice?

Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. For what blessings am I most thankful? How have God's blessings borne fruit in my life?

A message from Cafod

We know that you are preparing for Christmas amid uncertainty and challenge. As we prepare for Christmas in the UK, Afghanistan's harsh winter is setting in. 23 million people are now unable to feed themselves daily. Whole regions of the country are on the brink of famine. Millions have fled their homes, the overwhelming majority are women and children. The Disaster Emergency Committee, of which Cafod is a member, are launching an Afghanistan Crisis Appeal which you may have seen on UK broadcast media.

Cafod has worked with local partners in Afghanistan for many years. They and our sister agencies are assessing need and responding. We know the Catholic community will want to express their compassion for our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan who have suffered so much. Gifts will provide food, clean water, and winter fuel to vulnerable families.

If you wish to make a donation to this appeal please click [here](#). If you do not have access to the internet, you may place a donation in an envelope marked Afghanistan Appeal and place it in the box at the front of St. Patrick's Church.



A Christmas Appeal from our Diocesan Justice and Peace Refugee Project

When doing your own shopping for Christmas, please spare a thought for the above project. It supports on average 300 clients each week, who all receive a bag of food. 102 of them are destitute and also receive a supermarket voucher.

If you are able to bring donations of rice, sugar, biscuits and toiletries as well as tinned fish in oil and tins of tomatoes and chick peas to St. Patrick's Church before Mass, they may be left on the table to your right as you enter the Church. *Please note: baked beans and tinned meat are not required.*

Thank you

Fr. Patterson wishes to express his gratitude for the a bequest from the estate of the late Mary Rogerson in the sum of £1,000.00 for St. Alban's parish funds. May she rest in the peace of Christ.

Honouring Sundays

In a Statement issued on Thursday, 18th November, 2021, the Bishops of England and Wales issued a statement to the effect that while the obligation to attend Mass on a Sunday would remain suspended, we should think about how we honour Sunday as a special day in our week. It reminds us that attending Mass is a *personal response* to the selfless offering of Christ's love. The full text of the statement can be found here: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/bishops-statement-honouring-sunday/>

Get vaccinated. Get boosted!

Cardinal Vincent Nichols has echoed the call encouraging people to take up Covid vaccinations and boosters when offered by the NHS. "The call 'Get vaccinated! Get boosted!' is more and more pressing."

"I add my voice to many others... To the voice of Pope Francis, who says to be vaccinated is 'an act of love'. To the voice of my favourite football manager, Jurgen Klopp: 'The whole vaccination process is a question of solidarity, loyalty and togetherness'. He adds: 'There is only one answer: "You do it." "Yes, please act quickly. Here is real protection, for yourself and for others."

Pope Francis urges us to do so [in this video message](#).



ZOE Covid weekly update and some useful tips as to how to stay safe this Christmas

In his weekly update, Professor Tim Spector speaks of how cases of Omicron are spreading in our country. The weekly update may be accessed [here](#).

In a separate blog (click [here](#)), Tim shares some suggestions as to how we can all stay safe for Christmas.

He continues to remind us, that as well as the "classic symptoms" of Covid, (a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of taste or smell), there are more symptoms emerging, namely a headache accompanied by a runny nose, sore throat, sneezing and a cough. It may just be a cold, but check it out by taking a Lateral Flow Test. Click [here](#) for the Zoe blog Do I have Covid or a cold?

Regional update

You may find this data from our region of interest. Figures are as of 17th December, 2021. ○ = no change

	New Covid cases in the last 7 days		People who have died in the last 7 days		People with Covid in NHS Trust Hospitals on 14th December		Percentage of those aged 12 and over having had 1st jab		Percentage of those aged 12 and over having had 2nd jab	
Gateshead	912	↑	3	↑	19 (QE Hospital)	↓	84%	○	77%	○
Newcastle	1467	↑	2	↓	42 (Newcastle)	↑	73%	○	66%	○
South Tyneside	609	↑	5	↑	71 (+ Sunderland)	↓	82%	○	76%	↑
North Tyneside	1053	↑	4	↓	26 (Northumbria)	↑	87%	○	81%	↑