

# St Gabriel's Aldersbrook

Parish Magazine - Spring 2026



*Wanstead Flats*

*Photo - Jonathan Whitelocke*

A Church for the Heart of Aldersbrook

# St Gabriel's Aldersbrook

## Our Mission Statement

*Inspired by the Archangel Gabriel:*

Through our worship we draw closer to God. In our lives we are messengers of God's love for all, seeking to bring wholeness, hope and joy in the communities where we live and work.

**Vicar:** Reverend Canon Martyn Hawkes 0208 9890315 Email: [stgabrielsvicar@icloud.com](mailto:stgabrielsvicar@icloud.com)

**Licensed Lay Minister:** Henry Lau Email: [henrykolau@gmail.com](mailto:henrykolau@gmail.com)

**Assistant Curate:** Reverend Amy Taylor Email: [stgabrielscurate@gmail.com](mailto:stgabrielscurate@gmail.com)

**Children and Families Coordinator:** Clare Reeves Email: [wwa.families@gmail.com](mailto:wwa.families@gmail.com)

**Parish Safeguarding Officer:** Caroline Ferguson Email: [stgabrielssafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:stgabrielssafeguarding@gmail.com)

## St Gabriel's Community Hall

For information and bookings contact Nick: 07351 734637

Email [aldersbrookstgabriels@gmail.com](mailto:aldersbrookstgabriels@gmail.com)

Website <http://stgabrielsaldersbrook.org.uk/>

We are also on Facebook and Twitter

## Regular Service Pattern:

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Month: 8.30am Holy Communion

10.00am A shorter all-age Parish Eucharist

2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: 10am Parish Eucharist

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: 5pm Evening Service

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: 10am Sunday School activities during Parish Eucharist

Wednesday 11am Holy Communion

## Times for Prayer:

Morning Prayer: Mon, Wed, Thu 9am in-person

Evening Prayer: Mon-Thu 5pm in church and on Zoom

Wednesday 9.30am Prayer group

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday 7.00pm Eucharistic Adoration

4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday 7.30pm Contemplative prayer

## Other Regulars:

The church is open Tuesday and Thursday from 10.00 till noon Spiritual Growth Group

7-8.30am 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays

Tai Chi meditation 10.15-11.15am every Thursday

Pre-school Playgroup 12-1.30 every Wednesday

After school club 3.30pm Wednesdays during term time

## Pastoral Care: the glue that keeps us together

It's a refrain that's been oft repeated of late, and regularly by me. Life is hard for many. Whether we are fortunate enough to have enough money (or more than) to keep us going, or are struggling to make ends meet the world around us, the climate, the state of the nation are all weighing heavily on our spirits. It's partly why we chose January to open our doors for a comedy night - to laugh in the face of despair and the darkness of the damp winter nights.



But no comedy night will provide us with all we need to see off the difficulties of life in 2026. We need each other, and the strength of human relationships to enable us to thrive, or even just to survive at times. We have been developing a focus on pastoral care at St Gabriel's over the past few months, which will continue to be a priority in 2026. Recognizing our limitations, we are seeking to build some simple, but hopefully meaningful structures that provide support both for our regular worshippers and for the wider community. We have some places where warmth and relationship can grow: the Get-Together Group on Tuesday afternoons is a space where anything can happen, from chat, to chess, to jigsaw to chair yoga, but usually plenty of laughter to go round. The open church on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings where there's a quiet space or an opportunity to chat and drink coffee. The Tai Chi class on Thursday morning, or the Meditation group that follows it before lunch, which had the best-looking plate of biscuits I'd seen for sometime the other week. And we shouldn't forget Sunday itself, the heart-beat of all we do and not just a place of worship, but a point of human and divine contact and relationship both during and after the service. And please, do not ever forget that these exist, not for the benefit of a club or a clique but for the whole community, regardless of faith, doubt, sexuality, ethnicity. Immigration status, disability or any other means by which people may feel categorised or excluded.

In addition to these we have what we call a pastoral network - people whose role is simply to look out for others, to be aware of a small section of our contacts who may or may not be regulars at church but who we wish to care for as best as we can with our limited means. It's an evolving way in which care can be made real and meaningful.

We are pleased to be part of a wider community of Aldersbrook in which care happens, and the many other groups of people of faith or goodwill who in selfless ways provide the invisible glue that holds our communities together. Thank you to each and every one, because It's never been a more important task, and one we can not let go of in times like this.

May God bless and keep you and yours as we look towards the Spring with hope and encouragement. **Martyn**

THE REDBRIDGE CREATES THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

An Amateur production by arrangement with LW Entertainment Ltd

# JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT

Lyrics by  
Tim Rice

Music by  
Andrew Lloyd  
Webber

Tickets  
[vrcl.uk/joseph](http://vrcl.uk/joseph)

VISION  
REDBRIDGE  
CULTURE & LEISURE

26 - 29 March

Sir James Hawkey Hall, Woodford Green, IG8 0BG

London Borough of  
Redbridge

## Sesame\_Pilates and yoga

Monday - St Gabriels Church Hall - 7pm-8pm

Thursday - Zoom Class- 11am-12pm

Friday - Aldersbrook Lawn Tennis Club - 10am - 11am



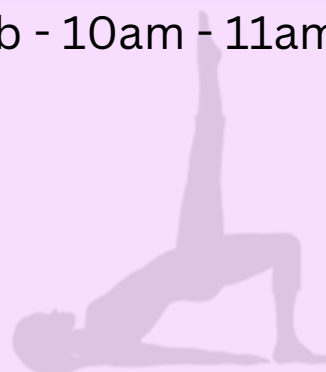
[sesameseed@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sesameseed@hotmail.co.uk)



07730372788



[www.fitnesspilatesandyoga.co.uk](http://www.fitnesspilatesandyoga.co.uk)



## Services and Events

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**Saturday 14th March** - New Redbridge Wind Orchestra Concert 7:30pm  
- nrwo.co.uk



**Sunday 15th March** - Mothering Sunday

**Saturday 21st March** - Friends of St Gabriels - St Patrick's Day Ceilidh



**Sunday 22nd March** - Forest Philharmonic concert

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### Holy Week:

**Sunday 29th March** - Palm Sunday

10am meet in Wanstead park for procession to Church - corner of Northumberland Ave and Ingatestone Road

5pm Evensong for Passiontide 5pm



**Tuesday 31st March:** Tenebrae 7.30pm

**Thursday 2nd April** - Mass of Last Supper, Foot-washing and stripping of the altars 8pm



**Friday 3rd April** - Good Friday

Children's Service 11.30am, followed by hot cross buns

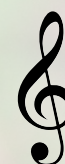
Stations of the cross and Good Friday liturgy 1- 3pm



**Sunday 5th April** - Easter Sunday

6am: Mass of the Dawn

10am: Easter Day service for all ages, followed by easter egg hunt

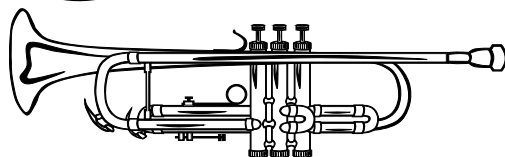



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**Saturday 18th April** - Charity coffee morning

**Saturday 25th April** - All Saints' Chorus concert





**NEW REDBRIDGE WIND ORCHESTRA**

# **SPRING CONCERT**

**Saturday 14th March 2026 at 7:30PM**

**St Gabriel's Church  
12 Aldersbrook Road , Wanstead E12 5HH**

**INTERVAL REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED**

**More Information:**

Tickets £10  
Concessions £7  
At the door



## Tin in a Bin

I was interested to read a piece on the BBC website about the new Crisis and Resilience Fund beginning in April - a government plan to reduce dependence on food banks by issuing cash to those in "financial shock" rather than vouchers, emergency food parcels and referrals to food banks as currently happens. While this plan seems to have been received positively, there is concern that the amount of money allocated by the government has not increased, so there is some skepticism about the "reach" of the scheme.



It has long seemed shocking that in the 21st century we have reached a point where food banks have become ubiquitous (along with baby banks, clothes banks and hygiene banks, depending on where you live). So any move to improve financial security while maintaining personal agency is to be applauded, but, knowing the incredible level of demand, I fear we will have food banks with us still for many years to come.

The Tin in a Bin network, based in Wanstead, feeds into a large number of local food banks, charities, and community and outreach kitchens, so it is rare that a home cannot be found for the generous donations of local residents. However, we respectfully ask that items donated are unopened and within date for obvious health and hygiene reasons. Our aim is to maintain the self respect of those in need - after all, it is said that many of us are only one pay cheque away from a similar position.

You can make donations of food and toiletries to Tin in a Bin at many addresses around Wanstead and Aldersbrook, marked by posters in windows and on gates, and of course at St Gabriel's church when it is open. Thank you for your generosity.

*Helen Bonnicks, for Tin in a Bin.*

## After School Club

Did you know that Snowdrops are also known as Candlemass Bells?

Our Snowdrop suncatchers are made from recycled materials (pringle tube lids and thread). We made them to celebrate Candlemass.

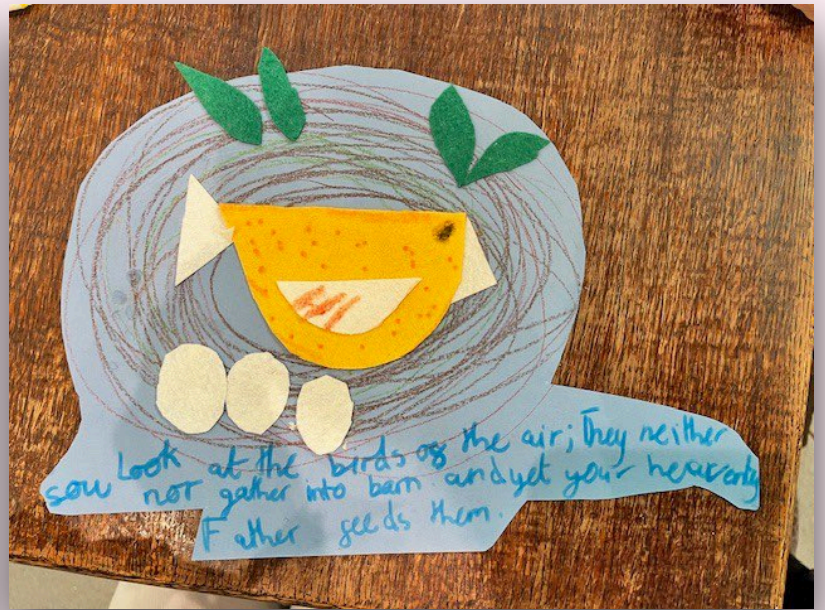


Candlemass February is the Church Festival celebrating the presentation of Jesus in the temple and is 40 days after Christmas. Often the first wildflowers to appear at this time are snowdrops and traditionally they would have been used to decorate churches but now we leave them to grow in their natural habitat. The beautiful delicate white bell shaped flowers welcome Spring for us and also symbolise hope.

We listened to the story of Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:22-38) who waited in hope for many years. When they saw Jesus in the temple Simeon realised it was Jesus they had been waiting for, the Light of the World and Anna saw the hope that Jesus would bring.

These Snowdrop Suncatchers remind us of the hope and light Jesus brings to the world.





## Sunday School

### Do Not Worry - Fruit and Craft activities

God will always love and watch over His creation and His children. Jesus had some comforting words for his disciples (Matthew 6 v25-33).

We talked about what we should worry about and what we shouldn't worry about. Then we thought about how we have been given Earth to look after with food, and drink and things that can be easily grown, harvested, shared and how nature responds to the gifts given by God. If we take care of our resources, do not ruin or waste them, then there is no need to worry and we can save our worries for the things that really matter.





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bookings  
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St Gabriel's Church Hall, Park Rd, Aldersbrook E12 5HQ  
Email: wansteadparkpreschool@gmail.com Tel: 07305496716  
Book your visit!



*We are a not-for-profit organisation, so every penny goes back to the pre school.*





# Saint patrick's Day Ceilidh

**21 MARCH 2026, 7-10:30 PM  
IN ST GABRIEL'S CHURCH  
ALDERSBROOK**

**Live music and ceilidh calling by  
Pastiche Band**

**Bar by St Gabri-Ales**

**Baked potatoes by SPUDS**

**Tickets: [bit.ly/ceilidh26](https://bit.ly/ceilidh26)**

**£15 Adults, £5 Children over 5**

**Contact: [friendsofstgabriels2021@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofstgabriels2021@gmail.com)**

friends  
of **A**

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Our January Blues Comedy night was a great success with the 180 attendees raising £4500.

**Harry Hill makes surprise appearance at St Gabriel's comedy night**



Left to right: Fr Martyn Hawkes, Harry Hill, Laura Smyth and Jen Brister

Harry Hill made a surprise appearance at St Gabriel's Banish the Blues comedy night last month. Hosted by local comedian and podcaster Laura Smyth, the event also featured Jen Brister. The sell-out night was organised by the Friends of St Gabriel's to raise money for the ongoing refurbishment of the community hall. "We were incredibly grateful for such brilliant acts giving up their time to help us raise funds to restore this much-loved community asset back to its former glory," said Father Martyn Hawkes. Visit [wnstd.com/fsg](http://wnstd.com/fsg)

P E E P R S U A W Q S C O Y B  
 C O T T O N T A I L H F D Z Q  
 H X J S F Y E C G N X L C X L  
 C U E Z N U W H F L A O T C K  
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**EASTER  
 WORD SEARCH**

Word list:

- |         |            |
|---------|------------|
| BUNNY   | CHOCOLATE  |
| CANDY   | COTTONTAIL |
| CARROTS | DYE        |
| CHICKS  | EGGS       |
| FAMILY  | HOP        |
| FIND    | PEEP       |
| FLOWERS | RABBIT     |
| HIDE    | SPRING     |





## Future Events still need your support

**Saturday March 21<sup>st</sup> 2026** - Join the fun of the, all ages Ceilidh with music and calling by Pastiche band. (See poster on P.11)

Tickets £15.00 each, £5.00 for children over 5 years, a bar and loaded baked potatoes by Romford Road SPUDS.

Join the dance no experience required!



## Thursday May 7<sup>th</sup> 7pm

Our popular local history night returns in the church.

Jane Skelding will revisit her history of the estate with new stories about some of the famous and important people who were involved with the estate, such as Winston Churchill, who gave several speeches here and had a special link with the area. Mark Gorman and Peter Williams will also be sharing their most recent research into the local unemployed labourers who built many of the features we now take for granted on Wanstead Flats. 100 years ago, without machinery and often in harsh winter conditions, these workers created much of the landscape we know today. Local history societies and the St Gabriel's archives will also have stalls and be on hand to answer your questions.

If you have lived here for a while, we have a question for you...we are trying to pinpoint when the Courtney Hotel opened...anyone who has information, please email us at [friendsofstgabriels2021@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofstgabriels2021@gmail.com). We would love to hear the oldest memory of the hotel.



Look out for tickets on sale from April for the event on 7th May.

## Fund Raising and Grants

St Gabriel's Church has been at the heart of the Aldersbrook community for over a hundred years. Originally built by public subscription the hall is an asset that serves thousands of local people each year, by providing a space for an enormous range of recreational, social and educational activities. However, the maintenance and upkeep of an ageing estate is extensive, costly and time-consuming.

For the past few years, a group of mainly non-church goers has been working with Father Martyn to run the Friends of St Gabriel's. Through a number of events and grant applications, the Friends have helped the church to install solar panels on the hall roof, refit the hall kitchen, improve disabled access to the hall and to create new, accessible storage that will benefit all users.

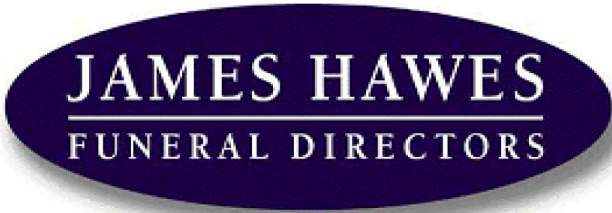
The Friends want to thank all members of the community who have contributed to this work.

Work to improve the hall in time for its May 2027 centenary continues and anyone can get involved by volunteering with the Friends to organise events and activities.

Four charities have made generous grant donations and we would like to thank them and all those who contribute to them.



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**Hall & Church Users.** Most groups meet in Hall unless otherwise stated. Some groups run during term time only.

Group	Type	Day	Time	Contact Email
Wanstead Park Preschool	Pre-school	M→F	8am-3pm	wansteadparkpreschool@gmail.com
Hot Shots Football	Children's Football (5-11 years)	M&Th	3.30-4.30 Mon & Thur	mcnike13@aol.com
Beavers	Children's Uniform Group	Mon	5.30-6.30pm	21stefs.beavers@gmail.com
Keep Fit with Tom	Adult Fitness	Mon	6.30-7.30pm	tmmixon@hotmail.co.uk
Pilates	Adult Fitness	Mon	7-8pm	sesameseed@hotmail.co.uk
Get Together Club	Adults Art & Craft	Tue	1.30-3pm	ronfiler91@gmail.com
Dance	Children's Dance (2 1/2 years +)	Tue&F	4-7pm Tue & 3.30-6.30 Fri	sara@variationsdancestudio.co.uk
Scouts	Young People's Uniform Group	Tue	7.15-8.45pm	21stefs.scouts@gmail.com
Preschool Carers Group	Parent & Carer Children's group (up to 4 years) in Church	Wed	12-1.30pm	aldersbrookstgabriels@gmail.com
Art Club Project (Make it, Do it)	Children's Arts & Crafts Group (5-11) Upstairs Hall	W&Th	3-4.45pm	raquel@artclubproject.com@gmail.com
After School Club	Children's group (5-11). Held in the Church. Term time only	Wed	3.30-4.30pm	kevinoliver724@gmail.com
Rainbows	Children's Uniform Group	Wed	4.30-5.30pm	wansteadrainbows@hotmail.com
Brownies	Children's Uniform Group	Wed	5.45-7.15pm	4thwansteadbrownies@gmail.com
Karate	All Ages Martial Arts	Wed	7.30-8.30pm	carlaine1@btinternet.com
Tai Chi	Adult Fitness. Held in the Church	Thur	10.15-11.15am	richard.pratley@icloud.com
Mediation & Reflection	Adults: Spiritual Reflection	Thur	11.45-1pm	In Church
Yoga with Caroline	Adult Fitness. Held in the Church	Thur	1-2.15pm	redbridgeyoga@gmail.com
Guides	Children & Young People's Uniform Group	Thur	6.30-7.30pm	sarah_girlguidingwanstead@hotmail.com
Rangers	Young People's Uniform Group	Thur	7.30-8.30pm	sarah_girlguidingwanstead@hotmail.com
Cubs	Children's Uniform Group	Fri	7pm-8.30pm	21stefs.cubs@gmail.com
Babyballers	Toddler & Children's Football (16 Month-5years)	Sat	9.25am-11.30	<a href="https://babyballers4.class4kids.co.uk/">https://babyballers4.class4kids.co.uk/</a> Sophie@babyballers.com