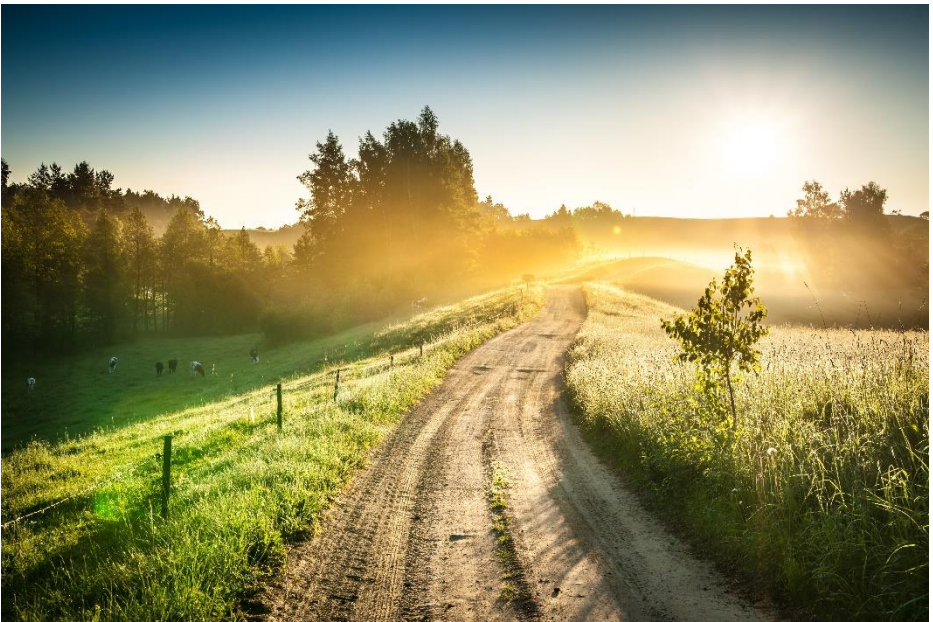


**ST. ALBANS
CATHEDRAL**



St Alban Pilgrim Way

A journey for the soul on your doorstep



Journey from St Paul's Cathedral to the Shrine of St Alban with our 35 mile walking pilgrimage. Take in some of London's most stunning parks, waterways and views and allow for reflections along the way, inspired by the life of Alban, Britain's first saint and martyr.

A Journey for Your Soul

What makes a pilgrimage different from a walk?

Like any walk, this is a bit of exercise undertaken alone or with friends. It hopefully takes you to some interesting places and sights. But a pilgrimage is also a personal journey giving space for God to show you your life, your home, your place, in a new light. It is an opportunity to reflect, to think bigger thoughts than we usually do in the busyness of our lives, and certainly more than people can achieve nowadays as they take the same journey on their daily commute.

Historically, a pilgrimage has been a journey to a place that is special or holy. So there is an expectation of having space and time to oneself, of being open to meeting others on the way, and of being open to the unexpected. So it is time for you. God will be there, journeying with us, but he knows that he may not always be recognized! He may just walk quietly alongside us enjoying the quiet and the views. He may also be with us as we engage in conversation with fellow pilgrims, sharing stories and ideas.

Pilgrimage Preparation

You will find in this leaflet details of each stage of the route, along with other helpful practical notes.

As you prepare for each part of the journey, perhaps on the train, you might like to use the following prayers and readings as spiritual guides and reflections, either by yourself or with others.

Ways to log updates and photos of your journey

We would love to view your progress throughout your journey! Use the following hashtag and social media handles to show us updates, photos, and videos or alternatively feel free to send them to us via email.

Hashtag: #StAPilgrimWay

Twitter: @StAlbansCath

Facebook: @StAlbansCathedralOfficial

Email: marketingassistant@stalbanscathedral.org

British Pilgrimage Trust Facebook: @pilgrimtrust



Read before each stage of the pilgrimage

Luke 24.13-35

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him. Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Pilgrimage Prayer

You call us, Lord,
to leave familiar things and to leave our “comfort zone.”
Like Alban so long ago, may we open our eyes to new experiences,
may we open our ears to hear you speaking to us
and may we open our hearts to your love.
Grant that this time spent on pilgrimage
may help us to see ourselves as we really are
and may we strive to become the people you would have us be.
Amen.

A Prayer for St Alban

Eternal Father,
when the gospel of Christ first came to our land
you gloriously confirmed the faith of Alban
by making him the first to win a martyr’s crown:
grant that, following his example,
in the fellowship of the saints
we may worship you, the living God,
and give true witness to Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.



Some ideas to guide you along the way

How do the route, the Emmaus story, and St Alban's story, provide food for thought and for conversation? What follows is to be used in any way that you find helpful...

Stage 1:

9.3 miles - St Paul's Cathedral to Hampstead Heath Station

We begin at St Paul's and then set off across the Millennium Bridge and right to Westminster Bridge. Passing Westminster Abbey, we go across the Royal Parks and walk along roads to Paddington Basin, then follow Regent's Canal and cross Primrose Hill and take roads to Hampstead Heath station. Two stops on the Overground to West Hampstead and then Thameslink.



We walk through the heart of London, where millions of people go to work, eat, meet and be entertained. What a range of activities! What a variety of people! Yet each person is unique and has their own story to tell. What sort of a community is it ... or could it be?

Emmaus As these two disciples shared their 7 mile walk (perhaps even their commute) from Jerusalem to Emmaus, they naturally talked about the news of the day – their own news as well as what has been happening in the world near and far.

Alban Alban was fully engaged in the life of Verulamium - one of the busiest cities in Britain at that time. As a citizen of the Roman Empire, he would have been fully engaged in public, civic, and religious life. He was a professional and public person! What was his life like before all of this happened?

Us What is happening in our lives and in the lives of our companions? We have or have had busy lives. What impact do the pressures of work and family have on us as human beings? Or, if we are retired, how are the pressures different or even absent? How do we find or make time to reflect?

Stage 2:

7.3 miles - Hampstead Heath Station to Woodside Park Tube Station

South Hill Park takes us to Parliament Hill. We cross Hampstead Heath, North End and the Hampstead Heath extension to pass St Jude's and join the Dollis Valley Green Walk (DVG). We follow this west then north to Woodside Park tube station on the Northern Line.



Green open spaces provide opportunities to meet, play, enlarge our vision. Hampstead Garden Suburb was the brainchild of Henrietta Barnett, who, with her priest husband Samuel, is remembered in our Anglican Calendar on June 17th. They dreamed of building a place where rich and poor lived alongside each other and formed an inclusive community.

Emmaus Jesus joined the disciples as they walked. As so often happens on pilgrimages and walks, the newcomer joined in their conversation and made his own contribution. Yet again, as so often happens, it was the discussion that gripped them, and so Jesus was accepted into their walking group, but was not recognized.

Alban Amphibalus came to live with Alban. We don't know how or why that happened. Yet they would have spent long hours talking. Quite clearly Jesus joined them in the conversation as Amphibalus talked about himself, his life and his faith. One can guess that it was only when the knock on the door signalled danger for his guest that Alban discovered just how much he had committed to the priest, and to the God of whom he spoke.

Us How do we find time for people and relationships in a world of busy-ness, crowded trains, social media, TV on demand, mobile phones etc? How do we ensure that we give adequate time to those whom we love? Do we have real friends? How do we relate to people who are different from us?

Stage 3:

7.5 miles - Woodside Park Tube Station to Elstree Station

Continue on the DVG north to join the London Outer Orbital Path (LOOP) until we reach Barnet Lane. We cross the A1 at Stirling Corner to enter Borehamwood and Elstree and go downhill on roads and paths to the station.



On this stage of our journey, we encounter lots of crossroads – places where decisions have to be made about which direction to take, where any decision may have significant consequences.

Emmaus Jesus opened his companions' minds to understand the scriptures. He and they would have been brought up to know and love the Hebrew Scriptures. They would have been taught to obey the rules, and also to look forward to the coming of the Saviour. But the disciples would have been asking how to apply what they had been taught to all that had been happening in Jerusalem. They needed a guide.

Alban Alban would have learned a lot from Amphibalus about what the Bible taught, and about the joy and fulfilment of being a follower of Jesus Christ. Now, as the knock on the door heralds the arrival of the strong arm of the law, he must make a decision that, either way, would change his life for ever. Having chosen to take the priest's place, a whole series of further decisions will have to be made, right to the end. Every decision would have consequences.

Us For most of us, life is full of choices and decisions. Siren voices tell us that we should be free to make our own decisions, particularly those that only affect us. But the truth is that every decision we make has consequences, and affects others directly or indirectly. "No one is an island." So what are the rules we live by? Do the teachings of Scripture influence our decisions? To what or to whom is our life committed?

Today there are sadly many people whose life gives them no choices, no decisions – their daily struggle is quite literally to survive. Others have no faith, no scriptures, no moral code that they have been taught. What do we do to help them?

Stage 4:

4.3 miles - Elstree Station to Shenley Tea Rooms

Follow the Watling Chase Timberland Trail (the Trail) to Shenley Tea Rooms.



We pass through Shenley, which housed a large mental hospital. We should reflect on all those who are suffering in mind, body or spirit. There are many people with profound psychological illnesses, some of which require them to be kept apart from others. Even more people face their mental, physical and spiritual problems with limited help or, even worse, drawn into a life of drugs, abuse, or slavery. Loneliness is consistently identified as a (or even the) major contributor to unhappiness and dis-ease. Loneliness is no respecter of age, gender, wealth or success. Conversely, loving relationships bring happiness and purpose and hope.

Emmaus The disciples had enjoyed their walk and, probably, the journey had been made more interesting and had passed more quickly because of the stranger who had joined their conversation. So they urged Jesus to stay with them when they reached their destination. It was there, as they ate and drank together, that he made himself known to them – their eyes were opened not just to Jesus, but to all that God had made possible through Jesus.

Alban Alban's story begins with his willingness to allow Amphibalus to stay in his house. As their relationship develops, so does Alban's self-understanding, faith and commitment. His subsequent decisions bear testimony to the fact that through the deepening relationship of Alban and Amphibalus, Jesus made himself known. Alban went to his death because of his faith in Jesus – because, like Jesus, he chose to say to God *"Into your hands I commit my spirit."* He could and would never be lonely again.

Us In a society where loneliness continues to be a real problem, are we open to other people? Looking around our family, our local community, our places of work and leisure, our church, how do we exercise a ministry of welcome? For what or for whom might we be prepared to make sacrifices or even die? God has promised to be with us every step of our journey, because he loves us. How do we try to perceive him or to welcome him in all that we do, and say, and are? What does the cathedral and its people mean to me?

Stage 5:

6.4 miles - Shenley Tea Rooms to St Albans Cathedral

Continue on the Trail downhill, then go north to Margaret Cottages. Follow paths to Moor Mill and the River Ver. Follow riverside paths (Ver Valley walks) to Park Street and New Barnes Mill. Go along Cottonmill Lane, then rejoin the river path to Holywell Hill. Turn uphill towards the Cathedral.



We approach the end of our pilgrimage. We come to places and signs that we recognize. We are nearly home. Over and over again we catch glimpses of the cathedral – journey's end. But is it the end ... or the start of a new stage in life's journey? God warmly welcomes us pilgrims into his home, but only to feed us, to embrace us, and then to point us to new opportunities, new challenges. At the end of every Eucharist, having been fed by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament, we are sent out to face all that lies ahead with new vision, new hope.

Emmaus Their eyes were opened through the breaking of the bread, and they returned to Jerusalem to share their good news. They discover that the other friends of Jesus have been similarly challenged by their meetings with the Lord. They too are fired up with new hope, new questions, new confidence. They have all been changed by their experiences and need to find ways to share it with others. They all begin to understand more fully that life is a journey with God, a journey that does not end with death.

Alban Through Amphibalus, Alban's eyes have been opened to recognize Jesus in his life. From the moment the soldiers knock on his door, Alban finds that he has to affirm and share that good news he has discovered – and that good news removes all fear of dying. So he is acknowledged as a holy martyr and the place of his death becomes a centre of devotion and a place where through the centuries the eyes of others have been opened to see God at work in the past, in the present, and into a future that stretches into eternity. Alban's story, and the cathedral church that bears his name, continue to inspire us today as together with Alban and all the saints we explore the riches of God's love for us and for his world.

Us: How has this pilgrimage affected us? What have we discovered about ourselves, our faith, our life, our world? What are we going to share with others?

Completion of the Pilgrimage

Welcome to St Albans Cathedral, shrine to Britain's first saint, Alban. When you arrive, you are more than welcome to join us for a service or simply sit and pray anywhere in the Cathedral. Please visit stalbanscathedral.org for our opening times and a full list of services.

A Final Thought from the Dean

"Alban is not just a dead hero from the past whose virtues we may strive to imitate. For Christians, our relationship to Alban is more mysterious and more personal than that.

As Christians we believe that death doesn't divide us from those who have gone before – the Church is a family that transcends time and space and death. Far from being dead and gone, Alban is a living brother who is still present to us in spirit.

As our patron saint he continues to pray and care for us – just as we pray and care for one another on earth. This sense of Alban's presence is very strong in the Abbey, especially in the shrine, and it seems to be felt even by many who have no official faith. It is hard to define or explain, but it is crucial, and it is what draws us here."

The Alban Prayer

Among the roses of the martyrs brightly shines Saint Alban.
Almighty God, we thank you for this place
built to your glory
and in memory of Alban, our first martyr.
Following his example in the fellowship of the saints,
may we worship and adore the true and living God,
and be faithful witnesses to the Christ,
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.
Pray for us Alban, pray for us all Saints of God.
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.
Amen.

A Prayer for Blessing

May God the Father who created you, guide your footsteps.
May God the Son who redeemed you, share your journey.
May God the Holy Spirit who sanctifies you, lead you on life's pilgrimage.
And the blessing of God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be with you wherever you may go.
Amen

