Keep in touch with

St Alban's Church

Revd. Marie Flint

Parish Office: 0161 477 0456

(Mon & Fri 9.30-12.30)



April
2026

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To Contact the Church……

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You can find lots of information about the church and its activities on our Parish Website:
www.stalbanofferton.org.uk

Find us on Facebook, Instagram, X and
www.achurchnearyou.com

Easter Services at St. Alban's Church Offerton



Brenda Writes-



When I last wrote to you, it was about my holiday last year and getting to know the people on the same trip as myself. Making an effort to speak to people I didn't know and the difference it made to the enjoyment of the trip.

Today I'd like to talk about a new venture that I started last November.

At a meeting of the Pastoral Group we were discussing how we could best help members of our congregation who maybe lonely or housebound. Plans were set in place for members of our group to approach people and see if they would welcome a visit or a telephone call to keep them in touch with what we were doing at church each week, to check if they were well and see if they needed anything.

I thought of the people who could get out but had nowhere to go during the week and enjoy meeting people.

This is when the idea of a '**Knit and Natter'** group was born.

Those of you who know me, know that I can knit and those of you who 'Really know me' know I can natter.

Our first meeting was on the 5th November when we celebrated Marjorie's birthday and we had eight people there. It was decided that we would meet every Wednesday come rain or shine.



This is a group that is open to everyone not just church members, male and female.
We have about 15 members and are open, and welcoming to all.



We have people who just drop in occasionally, just coming when they are free and the benefit of having it every Wednesday is that they know we are there when they want to come.

When we first met, we had a chat and decided what we wanted to do. Whether it was just bringing our own knitting that we were already doing or working on a project as a group.
Rosemary who was ill at the time and not able to join us, had been working with Beryl and Marjorie knitting 10" squares for single bed blankets. They knitted them and Marjorie's relation sewed them together. These were passed on to people in need through Woodbank Community centre, were they used to meet.

It was decided that we would carry on knitting the squares but make them up into 'Fidget Lap Blankets and Muffs'. These along with one of the bed blankets that had been finished before Rosemary died were taken by Revd. Marie to Bruce Lodge for their residents.
The Fidget items help people who are stressed or who have dementia. We are now making some for Lisburne Court. When they have enough, I'm going to contact other Residential home in Brinnington, to see if they would like some.
We have also knitted some white baby blankets for an organisation called Sands, who do memory boxes for parents who have lost their babies. Also bonnets and blankets for Stepping Hill Prem. Unit.

I want to thank members of our congregation who have donated buttons, wool and knitting needles to our group. The buttons are sewn onto the Fidget items, along with bells and bows. The other items ensure we can supply anyone who arrives without needles and wool and can enable them to join in our group. We knit, natter, drink tea or coffee and eat biscuits.

In addition to helping organisations with knitted items, we have been helping ourselves. A very important part of our group is the comradeship of the group. Someone to talk too, laugh and support one another, reminisce about our childhood, who we know from days gone by, but most of all Listen. People who live alone value the company of our Wednesday afternoon group of happy knitters.

Church choirs receive £400,000 boost for programme to increase participation by children



More than 200 church choirs aimed at children and young people are to be launched in a new programme. 'The Choir Project', working in partnership with the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM), will engage children and young people with their local church choirs amid renewed interest in sacred church music. The launch comes as campaigners press for English Evensong to be given World Heritage Status, to ensure that the centuries-old Christian choral tradition is recognised as an art form of global significance.

The number of cathedral choirs in England reached a record high of 207 in 2024, but 57% of local church choirs currently have no children. The new programme will tap into the country's rich tradition of choral worship with a view to sparking a revival of local parish choir membership amongst Generation Alpha, engaging them actively with Christianity. 'The Choir Project' aims to support upwards of 200 churches across England to establish or renew choirs for children and young people. Research which suggests that young people are more likely to remain active in faith communities when they are given meaningful roles, intergenerational relationships and opportunities for leadership.

Starting choirs has proven to attract engagement from young people in churches. One church near Saltburn has grown from two to up to 18 children on a Sunday by starting a church choir. As one young chorister said: "Every Sunday that you come, you better yourself in your singing and you better yourself in your knowledge of Jesus and God." Another said: "I love the stories about Jesus, seeing my friends and singing with the choir."

From a church notice-sheet



This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs Brown, our church warden, to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.

William Law



William Law is the saint for anyone forced to choose between losing their job or losing their integrity. It had all begun so straightforwardly. Born in King's Cliffe, Northamptonshire in 1686, William had studied at Emmanuel College Cambridge, been ordained a deacon, and been made a Fellow of the college in 1711.

But soon politics interfered. At his ordination, William had made his Oath of Allegiance to the House of Stuart. But with the accession of the first Hanoverian monarch, King George I in 1714, William found he was now expected to make his Oath of Allegiance to King George I. This he felt he could not do, with any integrity. But without the Oath, William lost his Fellowship and was unable to be priested.

It would have been a bitter blow to anyone wanting a career in the Church, but William did not change his mind. He wanted more than a career in the Church, he wanted to live a holy life before God, and to keep his conscience clear. And so he spent many years as a simple curate (he was not priested until 1728), living by tutoring, but also writing extensively.

And it was through his writings that William Law went on to make a lasting impact on the spirituality of the nation. One of his numerous books, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life,* is recognised as having had more influence on the English people than any other English post-Reformation spiritual work, except Pilgrim's Progress.

William Law's writing greatly influenced the leaders of the evangelical movement of his day, including John and Charles Wesley, and George

Whitefield. Law was also praised by Enlightenment thinkers such as the writer Dr Samuel Johnson and the historian Edward Gibbon. And 20 years after his death in 1761, William Wilberforce, the politician, philanthropist, and leader of the movement to stop the slave trade, also paid tribute to the effect Law's writing had had on him.

Law's spiritual writings remain in print even today – nearly 300 years later.

Thank you to everyone who kindly donated Easter eggs for Roughleys egg run. Here is a picture of Adam and David from Memories funeral care collecting the eggs, which will be distributed to families in need



April 1st – Fooling around – The BBC's Spaghetti farm



Probably the most famous April Fool's joke of all time was the 1960's BBC TV broadcast feature on the spaghetti farms of Italy. A BBC reporter interviewed Italian farmers about their work and the progress of the spaghetti plants in great detail. Spaghetti plants were filmed being carefully planted and then being harvested. And all in the BBC's most serious documentary manner. It took a while to appreciate that this was Aunty playing games. Whatever next!

The odd thing is that no one is quite sure of the origin of this very British tradition. Most attribute it to changes in Britain's calendar in the 1700s, when New Year's Day moved from 25th March to 1st January. Not surprisingly, the change caused a lot of confusion and mistakes around the start of April. Others look even further back, to the ancient Roman feast of Hilaria, when the goddess Cybele was celebrated with pranks and jokes around the Spring Equinox, 25th March.



4th April – Easter Eve



Easter Eve is the last day of Lent. It is the day between Good Friday and Easter Day and represents the one full day that Jesus was dead. It is a day of quiet reflection and anticipation for Christians worldwide. In various church traditions it is known as Easter Eve, Holy Saturday, the Great Sabbath, Hallelujah Saturday, Saturday of the Glory, and Black Saturday.

Easter Eve is sometimes incorrectly called Easter Saturday. But Easter Saturday is the Saturday *following* Easter Sunday. Most churches do not have any services on Easter Eve. In the Catholic Church, the altar remains stripped completely bare. Many Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, and other churches observe many of the same customs as the Catholic Church; however, their altars may be covered in black instead of being stripped. In the Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, and Methodist traditions, Easter Eve lasts until nightfall, after which the Easter Vigil is celebrated, marking the official start of the Easter season.

What did Jesus do on that one full day in the grave? Christian understanding varies on this.

The Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and most mainline Protestant churches teach that Jesus descended to the realm of the dead, on Holy Saturday, to save the righteous souls who died before His crucifixion.

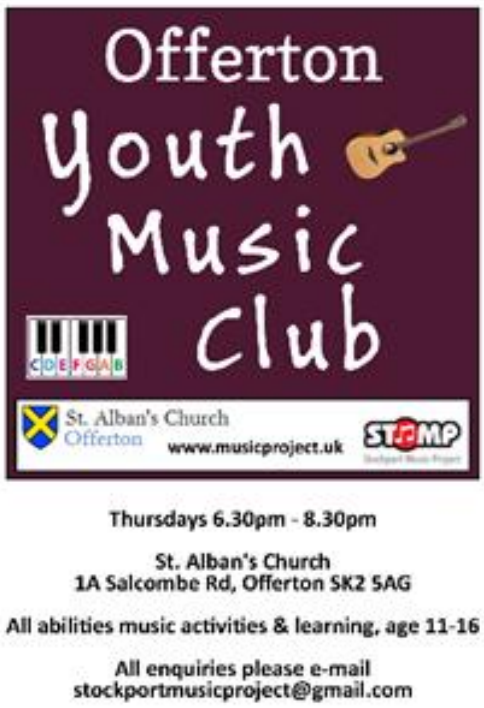
The catechism of the Catholic church calls the descent “the last phase of Jesus’ messianic mission,” during which He “opened heaven’s gates for the just who had gone before Him.” Often called “the Harrowing of Hell,” the dramatic image of Jesus breaking down the doors of Hades has proved almost irresistible to artists, from the painter Hieronymus Bosch to the poet Dante to countless Eastern Orthodox iconographers.

But some Protestants say there is little scriptural evidence for the detour to hell, and that even Jesus’ own words contradict it. For on Good Friday, Jesus told the Good Thief crucified alongside Him that “today you will be with Me in Paradise,” according to Luke’s Gospel.” “That’s the only clue we have as to what Jesus was doing between death and

resurrection," John Piper, a prominent evangelical author and pastor from Minnesota, has said. "I don't think the thief went to hell and that hell is called paradise."

The Bible says little about the interlude between Jesus' death and resurrection. Churches that teach He descended to the realm of the dead usually quote 1 Peter 3:18-20. "Christ was put to death as a human, but made alive by the Spirit," Peter writes. "And it was by the Spirit that He went to preach to the spirits in prison." The descent might not have become a doctrine if not for a fourth-century bishop named Rufinus, who added that Jesus went *ad inferna* – to hell – in his commentary on the Apostles' Creed. The phrase stuck, but it was officially added to the influential creed only centuries later.







Messy Church – March

This month our activities included an edible campfire, painted lightbulbs, mums certificate, shell trinket dish and the story of Shadrack, Meshall and Abednego who were cast into a fiery furnace.
















Easter Faith in atheist Russia



Three years after the Russian Revolution of 1917, a great anti-God rally was arranged in Kiev. The powerful orator Bukharin was sent from Moscow, and for an hour he demolished the Christian faith with argument, abuse and ridicule. At the end there was silence.

Then a man rose and asked to speak. He was a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church. He went and stood next to Bukharin. Facing the people, he raised his arms and spoke just three triumphant words: 'Christ is risen!'

At once the entire assembly rose to their feet and gave the joyful response, 'He is risen indeed!' It was a devastating moment for an atheist politician, who had no answer to give to this ancient Easter liturgy. He had not realised he was simply too late: how can you convince people that God does not exist when they have already encountered Him?

Cycle of Prayer

This month we pray for the staff and pupils at the Conscious Classroom and we pray for the people of Syria, after decades of war, drought and earthquakes.



Did you know that there is a good selection of Christian books to borrow at the back of church? Please help yourself and just return it when you've finished with it. We'd love to hear what you think of them too, so we'd welcome any short reviews of any of the books for inclusion in this magazine. Please email stalbanofferton@gmail.com with your reviews. Happy reading!

APRIL 2026

It's only April I hear you say – yes but it's time to prepare for **NO MOW MAY**.



Plantlife's NO MOW MAY is here, let's give power to the flower.

If you have a spring-flowering lawn, you may want to avoid mowing in April as well, consider restricting your spring mowing to March with a blade setting high enough to pass over the emerging leaves of your spring flowers.

Go wild for the bees, insects and small mammals by letting your grass grow. Leave those weeds to grow.

You don't have to leave all your grass to grow wild if you don't want to, pick a patch and let it bloom.

Let your grass grow and you could have a rainbow of wildflowers in your lawn, see the joy and know it is also the sign of a healthy thriving garden. Buttercups, Daisies, Dandelions, Clover are perfect and if you create the space – nature will come to you.





Your lawn can be ablaze of colour, help wildlife and bring more Bees, insects, birds and small mammals into your garden.

Nature will thank you and you will have a lawn full of colour.

If you can leave it in June as well – more the merrier.



Do you consider the Dandelion a weed?

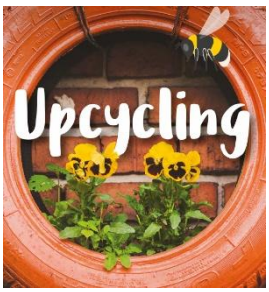
Is a weed a flower in the wrong place?

Do think of a Dandelion as a wild flower?

Weeds are native plants that provide food and shelter for many Bees and insects. We need to encourage our weeds, they have been here longer than we have and have survived.

Ideas from www.plantlife.org.uk

APRIL 2026



Tips for Upcycling in your garden this year.

Sowing seeds



Start your seeds off in old toilet rolls or egg boxes. You can plant the whole container straight into the ground and the card will break down as the plant grows.



You can also plant your summer bulbs in egg boxes and have beautiful spaced-out flowers either in your lawn or in your borders.



Old tyres

Lay them on the ground and plant inside them. Great for growing potatoes as well as flowers.



Tin cans



These make great pots, and the metal is thin enough to punch holes in the bottom using a nail and hammer. Personalise them by painting them in fun colours!



Other ideas

How about using old wellies as planters, or old plastic bottles, an old colander, or even an old wheelbarrow. I suppose if we thought about it, we could come up with a myriad of ideas.

Why not have a go and see how it turns out.







Loving people in later life

By the Revd Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former communications director for the C of E



Nearly one in five people in England are aged 65 and over, with more than a quarter of the population expected to be above 65 by 2065.
These figures illustrate why UK churches need to keep a focus on outreach to older people. To ignore them is to miss out on a major mission opportunity.

And so current initiatives include lunch clubs, exercise sessions, singing classes, tea and coffee times, outings and a broad range of social activities open to the community. But 'later life' or 'retirement years' is a catch-all term that says little about the fast-growing number of people in these age groups. A fit-and-well 65-year-old is very different to a 95-year-old person living in a care home.

One – hopefully helpful – way of describing ministry to older people focuses on their health and ability. My proposed categories would be:
The 'go-go' people: Men and women, often new to retirement, who are physically and mentally active and often looking for opportunities for voluntary service in areas, perhaps very different to their previous paid work. This age group is often the backbone of many churches, providing the voluntary support for all kinds of church activities – from staffing the church toddlers' group to membership of the church council.

The 'slow-go' people: Men and women who are no longer as active, perhaps because of illness, adjusting to life following bereavement, or needing to care for a family member. Here the mission opportunity may be around inviting them to join in church social events, such as lunch clubs or drop-ins, where they can meet new people and be drawn into the life of the church.

The 'no-go' people: These are older people who are now home-based or living in a care setting. Visits from church members, services held at care homes, and 'live-streaming' of church services can also be a link for them to the worshipping community. Many churches have adopted care homes in their area. And then, at the end of life, churches can also provide sensitive funeral services, tailored to the wishes of the bereaved, and their families.

Ministering to men and women in later life can be richly rewarding, both for the people concerned, and for the churches who take on this important ministry. We ignore it at our peril…



Dawn Chorus

If you sleep with your bedroom window open, you will know all about the dawn chorus around now. The birds are busy establishing their territorial rights, and the ‘early birds’ have probably already selected a nest site and started building.

The blackbird builds a solid cup of twigs, plant stems and leaves, lined with a thick skin of mud covered with finer grasses and leaves. The long-tailed tit forms a soft hollow ball of mosses, hair and wool, with a tiny hole as entrance. The wrens do it differently, with the male wren sometimes building several nests before his finicky mate will accept one. He gets his revenge, though, because he sometimes installs a second wife in one of the rejected sites.



My New Car

My old car was a little tired;
It failed its MOT!
So then it was I felt inspired
To go PHEV.

It is a good car – nice to run
And helpful as can be!
But now my troubles have begun –
It's cleverer than me!

I used to press a button once
For music on CD
But now – I must be such a dunce –
I can't find BBC!

I got it playing from my phone
By Bluetooth link maybe?
But then what truly made me moan –
I spoke – it misheard me!

It turned my lovely music off
And played some awful sound;
I tried to speak, I tried to cough
But no way back I found!

So if you want to buy a car
To get from A to B,
Don't forget you first require
A technical degree!

By Nigel Beeton



Welcome



We welcome Amelia May into our family

who was baptised on

8th March 2026

Chester Diocese News

If you have access to a computer you may want to catch up on the latest news by logging on to –

www.chesteranglican.org

St Albans Church is a vibrant and active Church of England Parish Church in Stockport

We welcome visitors of all faiths and of no faith.

Our services are as inclusive as possible, and all are welcome to join the church family for services and events.

Regular Services and Events at St Alban's

Sunday

9.00am Said Holy Communion with traditional language (1st Sunday only)

10.30am Sung Holy Communion for all the family (children's club 3rd Sunday)

Tuesday

10.30am Praise & Play (term time)

Wednesday

1-3pm Knit & Natter

Thursday

2-4pm Adult Craft Club (1st Thursday of month)

5.30pm Evening Prayer at St Alban's

6.30-8.30pm Youth Music Group (term time)

Saturday

10am-12pm Gardening club (1st Saturday of month)

3.30-5.30pm Messy Church (1st Saturday of month)