Keep in touch with St Alban's Church

Revd. Marie Flint

Parish Office: 0161 477 0456

(Mon & Fri 9.30-12.30)



December 2025/January 2026

To Contact the Church……

Parish Office:	0161 477 0456
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Priest:	Revd. Marie Flint 0161 480 3773 revmarieflint@gmail..com

Churchwardens	Eileen Comerford	0161 480 4235
	Tony Renshaw	
Treasurer	David Haslam	
Secretary	Janet Renshaw	
Reader	Brenda Baxendale	
Safeguarding	Jen Sadler	
	safeguarding@stalbanofferton.org.uk	

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

CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT ST. ALBAN'S CHURCH, OFFERTON

- Sat 29th Nov - 11am-2pm - Christmas Fair
- Monday evenings in Advent, starting 1st Dec - 7pm - Advent Bible Study in the Strawberry Gardens
- Sat 6th Dec - 3.30pm - Christmas Messy Church
- Sun 7th Dec - 6pm - Carol and Nativity Service (with an invitation to come dressed as a nativity character)
- Sun 14th Dec - 6pm - Albany Carol Service
- Sun 21st Dec - 6pm - Blue Christmas (remembering loved ones no longer with us at Christmas)
- Wed 24th Dec - 4pm - Christingle Service
- Wed 24th Dec - 11.30pm - Midnight Communion
- Thur 25th Dec - 9am - Said Holy Communion at St Alban's

www.stalbanofferton.org.uk

Marie writes –



The Bible Society recently reported that churches are seeing a 'Quiet Revival'. They report that the most dramatic church growth is among young adults, particularly young men. In 2018, just 4 per cent of 18–24-year-olds said that they attended church at least monthly. Today, this has risen to 16 per cent, with a notable rise in the proportion of young men attending. According to the report, the church is more diverse, people read the Bible more often and wider society benefits as these new Christians are more likely to volunteer or give money to charity.

Advent, Christmas and Epiphany seasons seem to me to be an excellent opportunity to respond to this small surge in people seeking answers to the big questions and trying to find a way to express their faith and spirituality. In Advent, we seek ourselves, searching ourselves and our own relationship with God in preparation for welcoming the Christ Child at Christmas. At Christmas we answer some of the big questions, celebrating that God meets us where we are, through Jesus who lived among us. And at Epiphany we explore further what Jesus means to the world. And throughout these seasons we explore themes of light and darkness. All wrapped up in age-old traditions as well as fresh expressions of our faith and a supportive community of believers. The church has a lot to offer!

At St. Alban's we are offering plenty of different ways in which people can ask questions, explore and encounter. In Advent we will be looking at Paula Gooder's book 'Journey to the Manger' with our ecumenical partners on Monday evenings in the Strawberry Gardens pub. Christmas Messy Church is on Sat 6th Dec at 3.30pm. We have our Carol and Nativity service on Sunday 7th Dec at 6pm. Blue Christmas, for people who are missing a loved one at Christmas time is on Sunday 21st Dec at 6pm. Our popular Christingle Service is on Christmas Eve at 4pm and the powerful Midnight Mass at 11.30pm. We will also have a service of Holy Communion on Christmas Day at 9am. Please share these details with your friends, family and neighbours and invite them to come along.

Rev'd Debs and I will also be running a 6-week course in January, called the START course. It is designed for new believers or for anyone who has questions about faith and Christianity. It will be held on Wednesday evenings, starting at 7.30pm and is completely free. Please do invite people to come along and please be praying that it is well attended

and successful. Please pray that we, as a church community, respond well to the 'Quiet Revival'.

As we enter the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, with all the expectation and hope that it holds and with all the tradition and heritage that we treasure, I am reminded through the 'Quiet Revival' report that God is not passive. God is active in our world and interested in all of our lives. In the words of Isaiah 43:19 "*I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?*
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

I pray that you experience the new things God is doing and that these seasons refresh and inspire you. Wishing you a wonderful Advent, Christmas and Epiphany!

Rev'd Marie



The story of the Christingle



The word 'Christingle' means 'Christ Light', and celebrates the light of Jesus coming into the world. Stories of how the Christingle began look back to the Moravian Church, which is found in the Czech Republic. The Moravians have held Christingle services for more than 200 years, and according to them, this is how the first Christingle might have been made:

Many years ago, the children in a village were asked to bring a Christmas gift to put beside the crib in the church. One family was very poor, and had no money for gifts, but the three children were still determined to take something. The only nice thing they had was an orange, so they decided to give the Christ-child that.

But then they discovered the top was going green, so the eldest cut it out, and put a candle in the hole. To add some colour, one of the girls took a red ribbon from her hair and tied it around the middle of the orange. It was hard to make the ribbon stay still, so they fastened it in place with toothpicks. The toothpicks looked a bit bare, so the youngest child added some raisins to them.

The children took their decorated orange lantern to the church for the Christmas Mass. The other children sneered at their meagre gift, but the priest seized upon it with joy. He held it up as an example of the true understanding of the meaning of Christmas, for the following reasons: the orange is round, like the world; the candle gives us light in the dark, like the love of God; the red ribbon goes round the 'world', as a symbol of Christ's blood, given for everyone; the four sticks point in all directions, and symbolise that God is over all: North, South, East and West; and the fruit and nuts remind us of God's blessings.

The Children's Society first introduced the Christingle Service to The Church of England in 1968, and it has since become a popular event in the church calendar. This candlelit celebration is an ideal way to share the key messages of the Christian faith, while helping to raise vital funds to help vulnerable children across the country.
Visit: www.childrenssociety.org.uk

The colours of Christmas



There are several colours that we traditionally associate with Christmas. They are green, red, and gold, and to a lesser extent, white and blue.

Green: Evergreen plants like holly, ivy and mistletoe were used for thousands of years to decorate buildings during the long dark winters. The Romans exchanged evergreen branches in January to wish each other good luck. The ancient Egyptians brought palm branches into their home during the mid-winter festivals. In Europe during the Middle Ages, the 'Paradise tree' which figured in plays about the loss of Eden, was normally a pine tree with red apples tied to it.

Red: This is the colour of holly berries, and it reminded people of Jesus's blood when He died on the cross. Red is also the colour of bishops' robes, which is how St Nicholas came to be portrayed wearing red. Red is also the colour of fire, which keep you warm during cold dark nights.

Gold: This is the colour of the Sun and light. It was the present of one of the Wise Men, and traditionally, was the colour of the star over Bethlehem.

White: This is the colour of purity and peace. It is the colour of the altar cloth at Christmas.

Blue: This is the traditional colour of Mary's robe, as the dyes that made cloth blue in previous centuries were rare and expensive. It is also the colour of the sky and heaven.

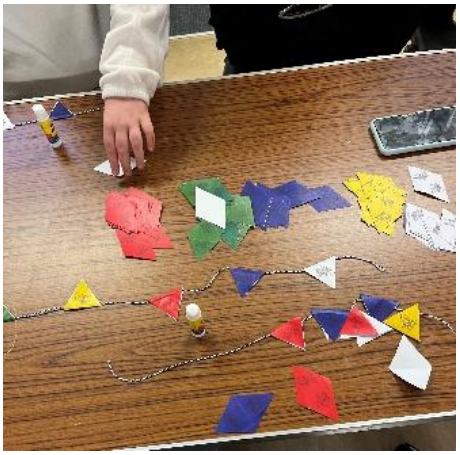
Our November Christmas Fair



Thank you to our wonderful friends who donated prizes for our Christmas Raffle!

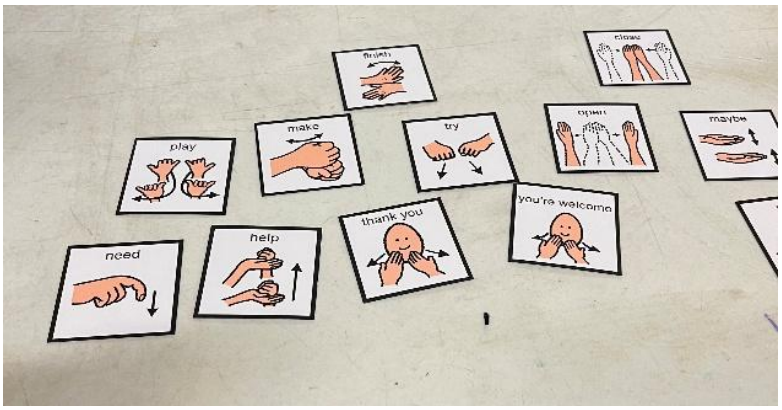


Messy Church - November

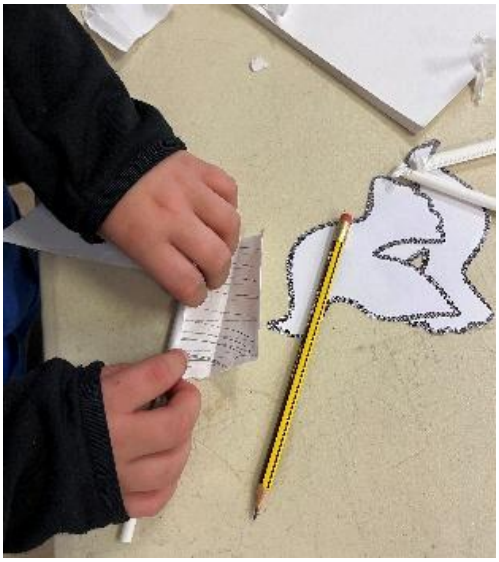




In November our activities included shaving foam marbling, emoji biscuits, peace dove, faith of our father, bottle decoration, peace doves wreath, butterfly outline and a Remembrance Day butterfly.
























thank you

December 2025

REWILDING is any activity that increases or restores nature, whether in a National Park or within a busy, urban environment. There is no set definition, since rewilding projects vary depending on the location, local communities and the amount of biodiversity already present.



Abriachan Forest near Loch Ness in the highlands of Scotland was going to be flattened, until one family plus their village saved it. In 1998 the community purchased 540 hectares of forest and open hill ground from Forest Enterprise. They have boosted biodiversity by replacing some of the non-native conifers with birch, oak, aspen and Scots pine, while at the same time, diversifying the age structure of the remaining plantation. 125,000 native trees have been planted and a 75% increase in wildlife diversity has been recorded. The forest is home to black grouse and crossbills, while red squirrels and pine martens have made a comeback. As a social enterprise, the Abriachan Forest Trust has managed the land to create local employment, improve the environment and encourage it's enjoyment by the public through a network of spectacular paths, family suited mountain bike trails, innovative outdoor learning as well as health and well-being opportunities. www.abriachan.org.uk





Ughill Farm is a pioneering landscape recovery project covering 132 hectares and forms a key component of the larger nature recovery plan for the city of Sheffield. When the farm came up for sale, the Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust knew it needed to do all it could to save the land from conversion to intensive agricultural farming, championing nature-friendly farming. The diverse terrain includes a mix of improved and rough pasture, lush woodland, meandering stream corridors, and an ancient quarry. As low grade, marginal farmland it is an important site for Curlew, Golden Plover, Lapwing and other nationally threatened birds that come to our moors each spring to breed. With its mosaic of different habitats, the site also supports a vast array of species, including other birds, bats and insects. By combining innovative farming techniques with ecological restoration, the trust aims for Ughill Farm to become a haven for wildlife, a thriving landscape for sustainable agriculture, and a beacon of hope for the preservation of precious natural heritage. www.wildsheffield.com/ughill/

Learn more about rewilding log onto www.wildlifetrusts.org/rewilding

January 2026

RSPB's BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH



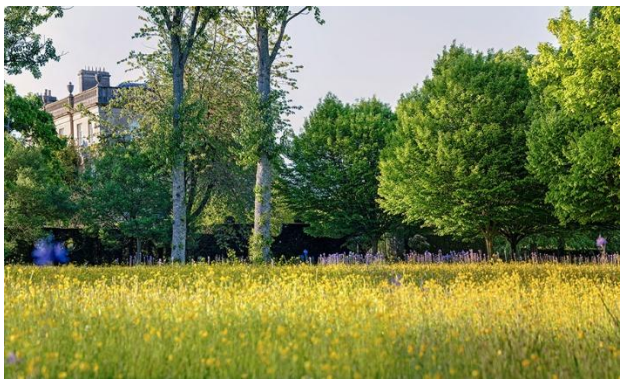
Join in the RSPB's Annual BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH. 23-25 January 2026. Just sit back, relax and watch the birds in your garden for an hour. It's easy and great fun

In mid-December you can register to take part in the world's largest garden wildlife survey at www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/big-garden-birdwatch
In 2025, over 590,000 people took part – and you could be with them in 2026. Once you register, the RSPB will keep you updated with top tips on how to get ready for your best Birdwatch ever.



On the day of the Big Garden Birdwatch itself, taking part couldn't be simpler! You just spend an hour watching the birds in your garden, from your balcony or in your local park, and tell them what you've seen. If you see very few birds or none, that's also useful information for the RSPB, so please join in. I will be, let me know what birds you see and how many many birds, please email stalbanofferton@gmail.com with your bird info – I'll get back to you in February with my results.

Finding Harmony: A King's Vision (provisional title) is a TV documentary in which King Charles explains how he wants to inspire a "sense of determination" to protect the environment through "harmony" and working with nature rather than against it. The King's Foundation (formerly The Princes Trust) says the feature-length TV film will be shown on Amazon Prime in early 2026.



The King says that "never has it been more important for the world to make a concerted effort to protect and prioritise our plant, and to restore our relationship with it. He hopes the film will demonstrate just some of the remarkable work being done around the world to put harmony into practice, from the forests of Guyana to sustainable communities in India – and, closer to home, through the work of his Foundation at Dumfries House and Highgrove. King Charles reflects on his decades of campaigning for sustainability, and he hopes this film will encourage a new audience to learn about the philosophy of harmony with the aim to restore balance to our planet which is under such stress.

December 2025

DECEMBER is a time for reflection about the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we can also think about the environment.
Here are some ecofriendly tips to consider for the month:

Use **public transport** to reduce your carbon footprint and avoid having to de-ice car.
Carry a **reusable mug** to reduce single-use plastics and support eco-friendly coffee shops.



Gifting an experience will help to reduce demand for physical resources and avoids filling homes with unwanted presents. Or why not **support WWF's work** by choosing to adopt your receiver's favourite animal.
If your receiver has a garden, consider buying plants/bulbs/seeds for their garden or even a houseplant.

Avoid single-use plastic items (especially glitter – definitely no glitter) that can't be recycled and look for things like Fairtrade or Organic-certified food and clothing. Buying **second-hand items** saves on resources needed to make new products, helping to reduce emissions and create a more sustainable future. **Vintage** clothes, books, home furnishings, and **refurbished** technology can all make great sustainable gifts.



Create your own **natural wreath** using local materials like holly sprigs and ivy trails.

Cut waste food by planning - be realistic about how much food you need and use up leftovers. Use Tupperware (and reuse plastic food containers saved after takeaways), and wax cloth covers to keep leftovers nice and fresh!



Make your own crackers and fill them yourself with sustainable options (like chocolates) and personalised festive favours. Make up your own jokes.

Use material tablecloths and napkins, they have a longer lifecycle than their paper equivalents as you can wash and keep them. Washing on a quick wash setting at lower temperatures will help to reduce your environmental footprint too.

January 2026

JANUARY is a great time to start making eco-friendly changes in your daily life. Small changes grow into big changes, so start small and let your Eco-Friendly life begin.

- Avoid putting warm or hot food into the fridge or freezer – allow the food to cool down first to **save energy**.
- **Use reusable containers** such as Tupperware or old takeaway tubs
- **Eat less meat**. I'm not telling you to stop eating meat, just to consider eating less to lower you carbon footprint. I love meat but do try to eat 2 meals a week that do not contain meat. We do after all need to support our farmers.
- **Talking about farmers** – try to buy local produce to reduce emissions and support the local rural community. Nearby Farm shops include
  - Brook House Farm Shop on Wilmslow Road, Macclesfield,
  - Nixons Farm Shop at Outwood Farm on Bolshaw Road, Cheadle
  - Norbury Farm Shop in Hazel Grove



Make '**enjoying nature'** your priority. Enjoy a walk in your local park, join in the Big Garden Birdwatch (see Eco News for how to join in), write about what you see or drawing something that inspires you in nature, grow your own fruit or vegetables, or exploring an area of outstanding natural beauty in the UK, be sure to fall in love with nature in a new way in 2026 and allow it to lead your thoughts towards God our Creator.

These tips can help you make a positive impact on the environment during Advent Christmas and into January. Remember to spread joy without harming the planet! Every small change adds up to a big impact on the planet

MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Mistletoes smelly history



Did you know that the word 'mistletoe' means dung on a tree? The Anglo-Saxons thought that mistletoe grew in trees where birds had left their droppings. Mistel means dung, and toe means twig.

True Story-

The nativity play was going as planned and Joseph and Mary were going from 'house' to 'house' knocking on the doors and asking it there was any room for them.



As they continued to get 'no room' answers, a little voice called from the back of the church: "You should have booked!"



Congratulations to Doreen Longdon on her 90th birthday which she celebrated with family and neighbours on 17th November. Doreen thanks everyone for the card and sends her love and best wishes.

From January 2026. ADULT CRAFT CLUB will be held on the 1st Thursday of each month. In January 2026 - News Years Day is the first Thursday so January Craft Club will be held on 8th January.

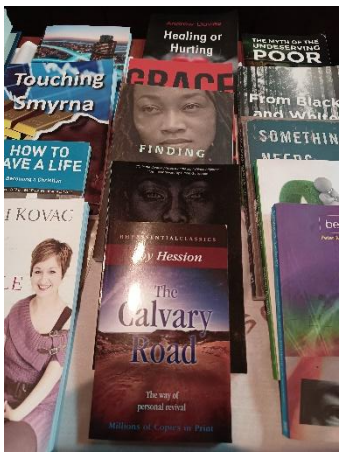
Our new Knit and Natter group





Cycle of Prayer

This month we pray for the staff and pupils at Castle Hill and Banks Lane Juniors and we pray for more local renewable energy projects in our community and that our parish and the Church of England is moved to climate action to meet our net zero target by 2030.



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!





Thursdays 6.30pm - 8.30pm

St. Alban's Church
1A Salcombe Rd, Offerton SK2 5AG

All abilities music activities & learning, age 11-16

All enquiries please e-mail
stockportmusicproject@gmail.com

What Does Christmas Mean To You?



When you prepare for Christmas
What matters spring to mind?
The coming of the Saviour
Or the gifts that you can't find?

Do you think of baby Jesus
As you deck the halls with holly?
Or are your thoughts preoccupied
With piling high your shopping trolley.

Will you be moved this Christmas
By the sound of carol singing
Or are you more in tune with
The sound of shop tills ringing?

On that family occasion
When you choose your Christmas tree
Do you think of how that tiny babe
Came to die for you and me?

Christmas to you could mean much more
If you're prepared to see
The reasons why each Christmastime
Just mean so much to me,

So, as you celebrate this Christmas
Why not resolve to start anew?
And change your whole perspective
Of what Christmas means to you.

By Colin Hammacott



May we wish you, your family and friends,
a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
God Bless



Our Parish Christmas Card



This years Christmas card donations will go to the Lync to the Stars charity, set up in memory of Lync Boshir who died suddenly at the age of two with no warning signs. The charity helps support families through the loss of a child.

If you would like to contribute please give your name and donation to Eileen by 14th December

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 (term time)

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)