Keep in touch with

St Alban's Church

Revd. Marie Flint

Parish Office: 0161 477 0456

(Mon & Fri 9.30-12.30)



June 2026

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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

Marie Writes -



If anyone of you have been in the unfortunate position of being in church when my microphone has not been switched off during a hymn, you'll know that I am a really bad at singing. I am also really bad at playing musical instruments. My primary school musical career started with learning to play the recorder, which, despite much effort and practice on my behalf, I was unable to master. I was then demoted to handbells, the playing of which only needs to know colours and to be able to count. I was no good at that either, so I settled on playing the triangle.

My children on the other hand are naturally talented musicians. They say these things skip a generation! Dylan, for example, can play any instrument he picks up, but is a particularly good euphonium player – a skill which he shares when playing with Stockport Silver Band. It amazes me when I hear people play musical instruments or sing in tune. It is such a gift of wonder.

But, despite my own lack of gifting in this area, I still like to listen to music and to sing praises to God. I am pretty sure that God is more concerned with the sentiment, rather than the quality of singing.

Music can be really powerful. It invokes emotions and memories. We use music to celebrate, to worship, to mourn, to remember and to just have fun. Music unites people in community and sometimes even defines groups of people. Film makers and advertisers use music to stir our

emotions. It can make us cry, make us buy, and make us sit on the edge of our seats in dramatic anticipation. Music helps us remember things as well – sung times tables at school, for example. I can remember pop song words from the 1980s really well.

God's people are characterised as people who sing - from the very first gathering of God's redeemed people by the Red Sea (Exodus 15), until the final, complete gathering of God's people before His throne (Revelation). In the Old Testament, music and musicians were important in the daily life of the temple and we even have a whole book of the Bible, the Psalms, that are songs. The Church in the New Testament church is encouraged to sing together (Ephesians 5:19). Colossians 3:16 (NIV) states: "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through

psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts". So, I think it's really important to keep singing, even if, like me, you're pretty bad at it!

Musical lessons for children can, of course, be very expensive and therefore exclusive. That is why we believe our youth music group that meets on Thursday evenings at St. Alban's is a real leveller – allowing young people from a range of backgrounds to learn to play and to work alongside other young people to make music together. We are grateful for the support of Stockport music project (StoMP) and a number of volunteers as well as funding from Skylight Community fund that allows this to happen.

So, we really want to celebrate the musical gifts of the young people who come to the youth music group, as well as other gifted individuals and groups in our community; and we will be holding another 'Gift of Music' concert on Saturday 13th June at 7pm at church. We'll also use this celebration of musical wonder to raise some funds for our accessible toilets project. Do come along and support the musicians and St. Alban's and to be thoroughly entertained!

Rev'd Marie

Celebrating 160yrs of Reader Ministry

Editor: By the Rt Revd Robert Paterson, a former Chair of the Central Readers' Council. The following is taken from an article which he wrote for The Reader magazine.



It is 160 years since the Reader Movement began in the Church of England. It was born out of a need to connect the proclamation of the Word with an increasingly secular world, a world in which the Church had lost direct contact with millions.

The founding archbishops and bishops realised that people were becoming biblically illiterate, and that there was a need to bring the Bible back into the home and the workplace. They founded a ministry to bring the voice of God back into the conversation.

What was so important in this episcopal initiative in 1866, as with the founding of the Mothers' Union nine years later and the Church Army 16 years later, is that they were all lay initiatives in mission. All, of course, were encouraged and supported by the ordained, but proud to be overwhelmingly lay.

That emphasis on lay-ness was not a form of anti-clericalism but was founded on a concept of teamwork in which lay and ordained would work together.

In the words of Archbishop Oscar Romero's famous prayer-poem:

We cannot do everything.

And there is a sense of liberation in realising

that this enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete but it's a beginning, a step along the way,

an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference

between the master-builder and worker.

We are workers, not master-builders.

We are ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

ether, to pray for and bring in God's kingdom.

To be a Reader is to emphasise the fact that your primary ministry is *not* in holy buildings with coloured-glass windows and pointed arches, but in being a disciple, a member of the dispersed people of God, bringing Him into the conversation.



Ten Crimes against churches a day



On average, ten crimes are committed against church properties every day. And of the nearly 4,000 offences in the past year, most of them were either theft, vandalism or violence, according to police data. It is a rise from the average of eight crimes a day recorded between 2022 and 2024, and the true figure could be higher, as not all police forces responded to Freedom of Information requests sent by the Countryside Alliance.

Earlier this year, £250,000 worth of historic silverware was stolen a church in Hertfordshire. Criminals targeted another in Nottinghamshire, by kicking in its stained-glass window. Others targeted gravestones outside a church near Preston, in what police have treated as a hate crime.

Ben Sims, head of policy and public affairs for the National Churches Trust, recently told *Premier Christian News* that the figures are “really concerning” at a time when churches are facing financial pressures, including the scrapping of VAT relief on listed places of worship. “Imagine you’re one of the volunteers,” Sims said. “You come and discover that all of the gravestones have been smashed, all the windows have been smashed. Or inside, the pews have been broken up. It’s a really demoralising, quite scary thing to happen.”

Some of the great questions of life

Why is abbreviated such a long word?

If your supermarket has been lowering
Prices every day. How come,
nothing is free yet?



Do you find it unnerving that what doctors do is called ‘practice’?

A joy and a privilege to be received by the Pope says Archbishop of Canterbury



The Archbishop of Canterbury has praised the Pope for speaking out against injustice and about hope; has commended working together for the common good; and has endorsed the strengthening power of common witness, in an address after a recent private meeting at the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican.

She prayed with Pope Leo and said: “It is a joy and a privilege to be received by you, together with this delegation from Lambeth Palace.”

She said: “Your Holiness, you have spoken powerfully about the many injustices in our world today, but you have spoken even more powerfully about hope. The world needed this message at this time — thank you. It reminded us that, despite our sufferings, people long for life in all its fullness, and countless people are working each day for this vision of the common good.”

She continued: “May we continue to work together in that hope, trusting that the one who has begun this good work among us will bring it to completion. Please be assured of a warm welcome for the Church of England should you honour the United Kingdom with a visit.”



60 years of Girl Choristers at St. David's Cathedral



St David's Cathedral recently marked 60 years since girl choristers first sang in the Cathedral Choir with a celebratory evensong. It was in April 1966 that the Cathedral Choir were busy preparing for a BBC radio broadcast of choral evensong, when in the days leading up to the recording, numerous boy choristers succumbed to a measles outbreak that was spreading through the local primary schools.

Facing the prospect of no choristers being well enough to perform, Organist and Master of the Choristers Peter Boorman approached music teacher Rosalyn Charles and asked if the girls of Ysgol Dewi Sant school choir may be able to sing. The school, Dean and Chapter all approved the emergency measure, and following a successful broadcast on 20th April 1966, chapter agreed in July 1966 that the girls were to become full choristers.

Ever since, the soprano line in the Cathedral Choir has been sung by girls aged 8-18, drawn from St Davids and, more recently, further afield in Pembrokeshire. St David's Cathedral pioneered the concept of girls singing in cathedral choirs, decades before similar initiatives were launched in other cathedrals. To celebrate this milestone, the Cathedral held a special evensong, with the Cathedral Choir joined by former choristers from the past 60 years.



Giving thanks for Fathers



There is no finer sound in the world than your child calling you ‘daddy’, or ‘dad’. I love it!

And as I look around our neighbourhood, dads today are far more involved in their children’s lives than when I was a child. Pushing prams, holding hands while out on a walk, bathing, playing games. Dads are in all these activities and more. I see the dads on either side of our house, and they obviously love their kids with all their hearts.

Unfortunately, too many kids grow up without a stable and involved male figure in their lives over the whole of their childhood and beyond. And no prizes for guessing the outcome; when they reach fatherhood, their kids often grow up without a stable and involved male figure in their lives.

The month of June brings Fathers’ Day – this year on the 21st June. May all dads reading this be pampered like never before! If it’s a fine day, it may be a case of ‘Stand back everyone- dad’s going to bar-b-q’. But before we get carried away, let’s spare a thought for those who for one reason or another couldn’t be dads, or whose dads fell far short of the high expectations we invest in them, or who lost a dad at a crucial time in life and feel a permanent ache where ‘Dad’ should be.

Our Christian faith teaches us to look at God as ‘Father’- we address Him as such in the opening words of the Lord’s Prayer, and it was Jesus’ custom to talk to God as ‘Father’. Maybe, taking into account those who have had a very mixed experience, or a bad experience of fathers, we should qualify what we say of God and call Him ‘the Good Father’, or ‘our Good Father’.

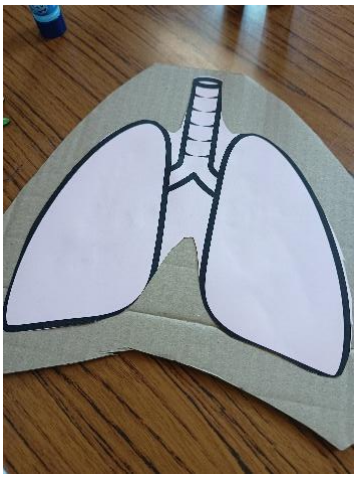
Because that it what the experience of countless Christian would testify to; that God is a good father. I think of the picture Jesus paints in the parable of the Prodigal Son; the father on the look-out for his wayward son day after day, and when he sees him in the distance runs all the way to him to embrace him. Now in Jesus’ time, in that culture, fathers did NOT run, least of all to welcome returning no-goods who had wasted half the father’s fortune. Fathers were people of dignity. Run? Never!

Jesus has turned that on its head. We can be sure that a welcome awaits us; we turn to God, or return to God, and find that He’s already half-way towards us, coming at speed to embrace us.

Messy May

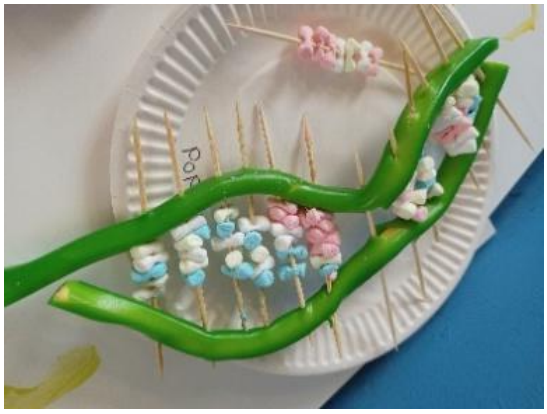
Our theme this month was Hands on Church, window greenhouse, moving breathing lungs, DNA, gingerbread people, body art, foot paper bag puppet and spring hangers





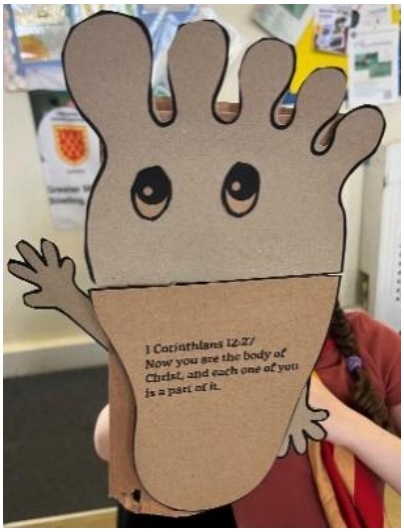
















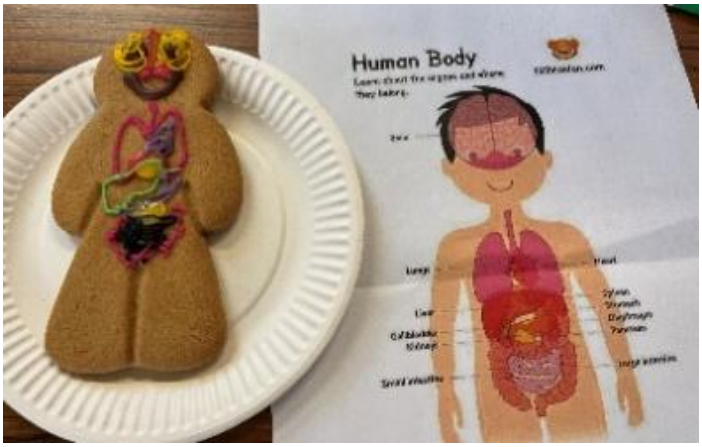











Human Body



JUNE 2026

LET'S GO WILD FOR FLOWERS……



Wildflowers grow in nature without being planted. We could grow wildflowers in our gardens, if we left our garden plot to its own devices, we would all have a wildflower meadow as our garden, this would take a little time, so we can speed up the process by planting seeds.

British wildflowers are some of the most reliable and beautiful plants you can grow. Being native, all of them have some benefit to wildlife, with flowers for pollinators or leaves for caterpillars and other larvae.

So why not give it a go, pick an area of your garden to plant up with British wildflowers, and see them grow, flourish and watch wildlife come into your garden. Most wildflowers thrive in poor soils although some thrive in damp soils and are best planted in a bog garden or around the edge of your pond. Always check the natural environment of the wildflowers before planting.

To have native wildflowers then the best wildflowers to buy are those of UK origin, the flowers have been grown in the UK and will help to support local, native wildflower populations. If you want a more meadow like area, then you may want to consider a seed mix based on colour or length of display. If you are sowing seeds to fill gaps in the border or in pots, then you might want to choose wildflowers in a range of heights, colours and length of display. You could buy a ready-made seed mix or individual packets of seed to create your own colourful display. Whatever you choose will not only look fantastic but will attract our native wildlife as well.



I hope you were able to join in with NO MOW MAY**.** Now it's time to get ready for **LET IT BLOOM JUNE**

Don't panic about going wild, give it a go, your wildflowers and pollinators with thank you, leave space in your garden for nature to continue to bloom this June.

Try not to mow your lawn, but if you must, set your mower blades as high as possible, or use a strimmer but remember to check for wildlife and never mow around the edges towards the centre as this leaves no escape for wildlife. Mow gradually towards the sanctuary area such as uncut grass strips at boundaries.

Keep not mowing for as long as you can, to see your garden come alive with wildflowers and wildlife – giving POWER TO THE FLOWER.

Ideas from www.gardenersworld.com & www.plantlife.org.uk

JUNE 2026

Storing and conserving water in your garden

How to make the most of every drop of rain that falls on your garden.



RAINWATER

You can collect rainwater in WATER BUTTS, you can collect rainwater from the roof of your house, as well as your garage, greenhouse or shed.

You will need a water butt attached to a gutter with a down pipe and a filter to prevent leaves and debris from getting into the water butt. Place your water butt on a flat firm surface such bricks, leaving enough space to put your watering can beneath the flow tap. You can also join several water butts together with connecter kits or syphons. Make sure your water butt has a close-fitting lid to stop plant spores entering the water and algae forming. You need to clean your water butt annually with warm water and a little washing up liquid – rinsing thoroughly.



Storing water in a TROUGH, usually connected to a downspout from a roof. Disadvantage of this is that they can overfill – unless you use it for rainwater from your shed or greenhouse where there would be less to collect. The water from a trough is OK for well-established plants and trees but not young plants and seedlings. It is useful to know that adding aerating plants to the trough will assist with water stagnation.

Whichever way you store water keep your gutters clear and use the stored water frequently to keep it fresh. If the water starts to smell, empty the container and clean it to start afresh, do not use the water on your plants.



GREY WATER.

Grey water is from showers, baths and kitchen sinks. Recycling household water for use as grey water during water shortages is very useful. However, do not use this kind of water on edible plants that are not being cooked such as lettuce, radish etc. Use grey water immediately – do not store it. Do not use grey water that contains bleach, disinfectant, dishwater salt or harsh cleaners. Use a watering can, to water your plants. Try to alternate between grey water and your collected rainwater during drought conditions. Ideas from www.rhs.org.uk

The Story behind the hymn - Lord for the years



Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord for the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of the Word, receive your people's praise.

Lord, for our hopes, the dreams of all our living,
Christ and his kingdom one united aim;
Rulers and peoples bound in high thanksgiving,
Lord of our hopes, our trust is in your Name. …

This well-loved hymn was written in 1967 by the Revd Timothy Dudley Smith, who later became Bishop of Thetford. He later confessed: "I wrote it on a train when I was very pressed for time. I'm thankful if something I write gets picked up, but I suspect anyone who does something in a rush later regrets that they didn't find time to apply the sandpaper a bit more!"

Dudley Smith had been asked to write a hymn for the centenary service of the Children's Special Service Mission, now Scripture Union, in St Paul's Cathedral. His commission was to write words that could be fitted to Jean Sibelius's *Finlandia*, as it was to be accompanied by an orchestra with this tune in their repertoire. And so – 'Lord for the years' was written.

Dudley Smith need not have worried about lack of time – his lyrics were a 'hit' in the cathedral on the day, and went on to become so well-loved that George Carey chose

the hymn to be sung at his consecration as Bishop of Bath and Wells, and then again later, in 1991, on his consecration as Archbishop in Canterbury Cathedral.

The hymn continued to be widely sung and loved, until in 2002 Timothy Dudley Smith was asked to write an extra verse for it so that it could even be sung around the time of the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

Many of the words in the hymn were true for Queen Elizabeth herself. She would have celebrated her 100th birthday this April, and her 'official' birthday on the second Saturday in June. She did indeed thank God 'for the years Your love has kept and guided, urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way'…

And so indeed the 'extra' verse added for the Queen also held true:

Lord for our hopes, the dreams of all our living,
Christ and his kingdom one united aim,
Rulers and peoples bound in high thanksgiving,
Lord of our hopes, our trust is in your Name.



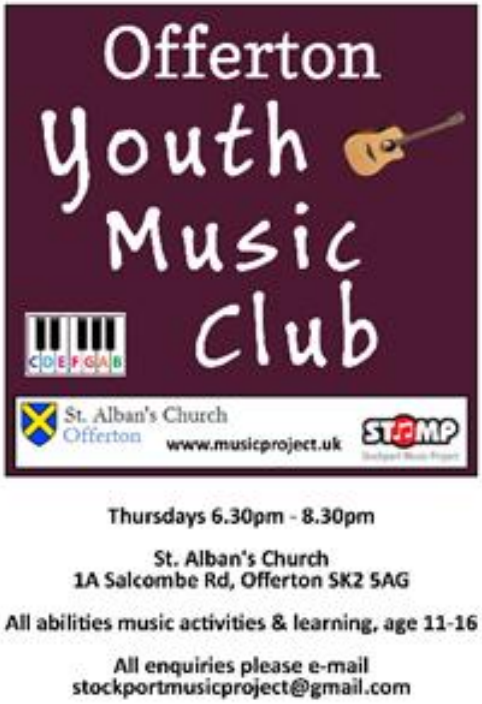
Oops!

I went grocery shopping on an empty stomach and am now the proud owner of Aisle 4.



Cycle of Prayer

This month we pray for the staff and residents at Bruce Lodge and we pray for the people of Ehiopia and Kenya, where people are experiencing the driest conditions and hottest temperatures since records began







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!



Editor: Nigel Beeton writes: Every June the Monarch's 'official' birthday is marked by a military parade in London, Trooping the Colour. It originated as a way of making sure that troops recognised their standard flag – the colour – so that they could rally to it in a battle. This year it takes place on 13th June.

Trooping the Colour

A National occasion in crimson and black
No button misplaced; no harness is slack.
The rhythmic precision of mass marching feet –
The pulse of the nation and heritage meet!

The beat of the drums, the sound of the band
The parade is exquisitely, perfectly planned.
The long months of training, hard effort applied
Build up to this moment of national pride!

The horses and soldiers all form up in ranks
The audience watching can't help but gives thanks!
For those standing tall out there on the sand
Prepared to give all for our King and our land.

By Nigel Beeton

Welcome

We welcome into our family Billy Jack Charles Phythian who was baptised on 3rd May 2026



also Callie and Caleb who were baptised on 17th May 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)