Keep in touch with

St Alban's Church

Revd. Marie Flint

Parish Office: 0161 477 0456

(Mon & Fri 9.30-12.30)



March 2026

To Contact the Church……

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	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

Holy Week and Easter Services at St. Alban's Church Offerton



Palm Sunday 29th March
10.30am Holy Communion with procession of Palms



Maundy Thursday 2nd April
7pm Holy Communion with footwashing



Good Friday 3rd April
12pm Stations of the Cross
1pm Good Friday Reflections
2pm The Liturgy of Good Friday



Easter Sunday 5th April
9am - Book of Common Prayer
10.30am - Festival Celebration service with Holy Communion

St Alban's Church Offerton invites you to

Messy Easter

Saturday 4th April

3.30pm



Marie writes –



Can you believe that it has been 6 years since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic? To me, it seems like a distant memory, but also a bit like it happened yesterday. All of us will have had different experiences of the effects of Covid. Some of us will have been left unscathed and for some of us, there will be some deep-rooted trauma because we lost someone or something dear to us or because we are still living with the effects the virus has left behind.

The statistics for the pandemic are astronomical. According to the 2023 Covid enquiry, just under 227,000 people died in the UK with Covid-19 listed as one of the causes on their death certificate. The most deaths reported in this way on a single day was on 19 January 2021, when 1,490 people were registered. It is estimated that another 208,000 people died, not from covid directly, but as a result of the pandemic – people died because of delayed treatment for something else, mental health issues triggered by covid and because of the pressure the NHS was put under. In March 2023, it was estimated that 1.9 million people in the UK were suffering with long Covid.

So, while we want to put the dark days of lockdown behind us and wouldn't want to return to social distancing, it is important to remember. It is important to remember and commemorate those who lost their lives since the pandemic began. It is important to reflect on the sacrifices made by many, and on the impact of the pandemic on us all. It is important to pay tribute to the work of health and social care staff, frontline workers and researchers. It is important to appreciate those who volunteered and showed acts of kindness during this unprecedented time; those people who shone light in the darkness.

Psalm 23 is a well-known psalm that is quite often used at funerals. The psalmist paints a wonderful picture of God, as a shepherd; and God's relationship to us, his sheep. The shepherd knows the sheep and what they need. The shepherd provides good things for the sheep. The psalm tells us that God's love for us is great and that God's love and provision continues beyond our earthly lives and through into death.

But, when we do indeed "walk through the valley of the shadow of death", the familiarity, poetry, and beauty of the 23rd psalm have a different tone. The shadow is dark and the valley is long and deep. The valley is real and the shadow is there. But that doesn't mean that we have no hope, because a shadow needs light to exist. There can be no shadow without light.

Even when we don't see it, the light is with us through the valley. It is already a present reality. So, our idea of the shadow moves away from being the ultimate reality. It is, rather, proof that the light is also here.

That light doesn't undo what has happened or magically make everything better. It doesn't even give us an answer or explanation. What the light does do, is give us hope.

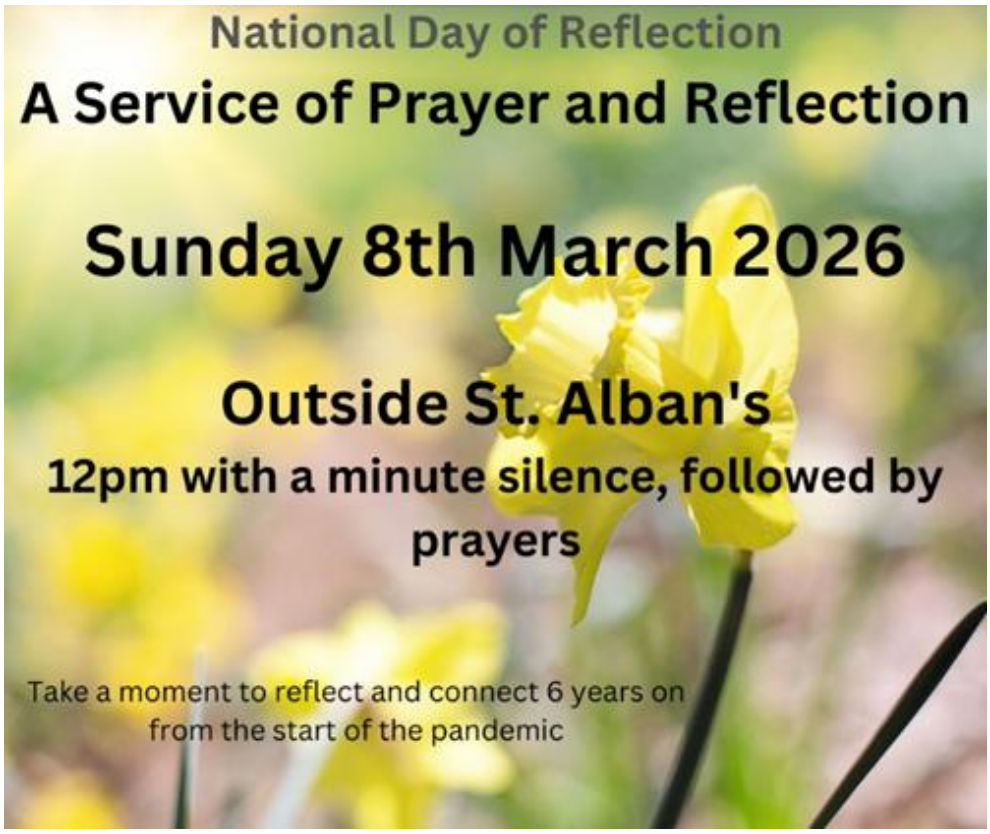
The light has always been there. It has been with us from the very beginning. The light is trustworthy and steadfast. And sometimes, we catch really good glimpses of it and sometimes it is really hard for us to see.

As we journey through Lent, and fix our eyes on the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus we keep looking for the light and hold onto hope. Our hope is that those who have died now rest in a wonderful place, in the arms of a loving shepherd God, where there is no pain, anguish, fear or tears. And our hope for ourselves is that we continue to see those glimpses of light; and that one day the light will pierce through the shadow.

You can take part in remembering at one of the many covid memorials that have been built across the country, or you can join in online at St. Paul's Cathedral digital book of remembrance by visiting https://www.stpauls.co.uk/remember-me-2020. Or you can take part in the Covid-19 National Day of Reflection on 8th March by lighting a candle and praying at home, or by joining us outside St. Alban's at 12pm on that day for a short service of remembrance, prayer and reflection.

Wishing you every blessing and lots of light,

Rev'd Marie



St. Alban's get START!-ED



From the beginning of the New Year up until Lent, we ran an exploring Christianity course, called the 'START!' course, once a week on Wednesday evening. The course was attended by a lovely group of people who were excited to learn more about the Christian faith and to discuss together how faith applies to their own lives. The 6 week course led us through aspects of our lives and faith, such as where God has been in our lives so far, the nature of God, the mess of the world, who Jesus is, what the Cross means and moving forward as Christians. There has been plenty for us to think about. We have all enjoyed great discussion and great biscuits! Pictured is a tableau, created by Rev'd Debs to help us think through what the cross means to us. During Lent, we'll be taking a break from meeting on Wednesday evenings to focus on the Lent course, which will be on Monday evenings at 7.30pm in the Strawberry Gardens. We'll be joined by our Methodist and Catholic brothers and sisters in Offerton to think about life giving habits, using Church of England resources called 'Draw Near'. All are welcome. But the START! group are keen to carry on learning together after Easter, so watch this space for opportunities to join in.

Rev'd Marie

Rev'd Debs, Rev'd Marie and Rev'd Raj

from Dialstone Methodist Church offering 'Ashes to Go'

outside ALDI on Lisburne Lane



How many church members does it take to change a light bulb?



What do you mean CHANGE??? That light bulb was given in memory of my grandmother! My father installed it with his bare hands! He donated his time AND the use of his ladder to do it, too! My family's been members of this church for four generations! And if you think you're going to come in here and make a bunch of changes all of a sudden, vicar, you've got another think coming!

Suits you Sir



For the elderly minister's 75th birthday, the congregation at St Mary's decided to give him a present of a new suit. He was so moved by the gift that the following Sunday he stood before everyone and began his homily with a tear in his eye, saying: 'Today I am preaching to you in my birthday suit.'

20th March - Cuthbert



Beloved monk and Bishop of Lindisfarne

Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (c 634-87) has long been northern England's favourite saint. It is easy to see why: Cuthbert was holy, humble, peaceable, prayerful, faithful in friendship, winsome, and really kind.

Cuthbert was born into a fairly well-off Anglo-Saxon family, and he became a monk at Melrose in 651. He and another monk, Eata, were sent to start a monastery at Ripon, but Alcfrith, who owned the land, insisted that they adopt the Roman customs, which Cuthbert's Celtic church did not allow. So, Cuthbert and Eata quietly returned to Melrose, where Cuthbert became prior in about 661. Then came the Synod of Whitby in 663/4, and the Celtic Church formally decided to adopt the Roman customs. After this, Cuthbert was sent on to Lindisfarne as prior, where he sensitively introduced the new ways, and won over the monks there.

Cuthbert was very much loved at Lindisfarne. His zeal was evident in his constant preaching, teaching, and visiting of the people. He was also said to have gifts of prophecy and healing. Occasionally, Cuthbert reached 'people overload'. Then he would retreat to a tiny islet called Inner Farne, where he could pray in total seclusion. When, to his horror, he was told he had been made Bishop of Hexham, he immediately 'swapped' sees with Eata, and stayed on at Lindisfarne as Bishop. Sadly, Cuthbert died on little Inner Farne, only two years later, on 20 March, 687.

Cuthbert was buried at Lindisfarne, but that is not the end of his story. For it was only now that his travels began. After the Vikings destroyed Lindisfarne in 875, several monks dug him up and set out to find Cuthbert a final, and safe, resting place. For the next 120 years Cuthbert was deposited in various monasteries around the north of England and southwest Scotland. Finally, in 999, Cuthbert was allowed to rest in Durham, where a Saxon church was built over his shrine.

All that travel must have done him good; when his body was exhumed to be put into the 'new' Norman Cathedral in Durham in 1104, it was said to be still in perfect tact, and 'incorrupt'.

25th March: Lady Day or the Annunciation



This beautiful event (Luke 1:26-38) took place in Nazareth, when Mary is already betrothed to Joseph. The Archangel Gabriel comes to Mary, greets her as highly favoured, tells her not to be afraid, that she will bear a son Jesus, and that her elderly cousin Elizabeth is already pregnant (with John the Baptist).

The church calendar is never quite as neat as some would like it. To celebrate the Annunciation on 25th March does indeed place the conception of Jesus exactly nine months from his birth on 25th December but the latter part of March almost inevitably falls during Lent. But the birth and death of Jesus are intrinsically linked – He was born to die, and thus fulfil God's purposes.

The Annunciation is a significant date in the Christian calendar – it is one of the most frequent depicted in Christian art. Gabriel's gracious strength and Mary's humble dignity have inspired many artists. Certainly, Mary's response to the angel has for centuries been an example of good faith in practice – humility, enquiry of God, and trusting acceptance in His will for her life.



Granny retired? – you've got to be kidding….



The idea that grandmothers retire into an unburdened world of gardening and tea-drinking, golf and knitting is no more than a pleasant fantasy these days.

Instead, nearly 63% of grandparents provide some sort of childcare to their under-16-year-old grandchildren. That amounts to around seven million older people, aged mostly between 55 – 74. As many as one in three is doing the school run. Nearly one in five is spending more than 10 hours a week giving other childcare.

America has a nickname name for them: the 'granny nannies.' Granny nannies do it for good reason: to enable their own children to be able to work longer hours. But granny nannies not only care for their grandchildren, they may also be providing comfort for elderly relatives of their own – and hold down a part-time job at the same time.

Perhaps Super-Granny-Nannies is the correct name for them!



Messy Church – February

We discovered how much God loves us through the parable of the lost son through pancakes, hearts, bookmarks, bees, bugs and pigs





















MARCH 2026

Littering

Litter blights every street, park and beach in the UK and costs millions of pounds to clear up every year. Worst of all, litter attracts litter. If an area is already littered, then people are more likely to drop more litter!



KEEP BRITIAN TIDY says this is about more than simply getting people to pick up their litter, though obviously that is important. We must change littering behaviour by understanding why people litter in the first place and by developing creative campaigns and solutions.

They work with communities, school, business's, local authorities and the government to educate, innovate and inspire, with the ambition to improve the environment on everyone's doorstep so that we can all love where we live.



The KEEP BRITIAN TIDY campaign has been growing since 1954. Why Oh Why are we still dropping litter!!!!

Littering is an environmental crime; in England it is usually dealt with via a fixed penalty fine of £150 but can be punishable with a fine of up to £2,500 in court.

It's a crime that effects every community in the country and pollutes every environment from the top of mountains to the remotest beach

It makes places look unloved and uncared for, it increases peoples fear of crime, damages our waterways and eco systems, and injures or kills pets and wildlife.



Unless it is picked up, litter can, ultimately end up adding plastic pollution to our oceans, breaking down into microplastics that are eventually ingested by fish – **YES** the fish we eat. 80% of the plastic in our oceans comes from the land. The cigarette butts and plastic wrappers dropped in our towns and cities; wash down our drains add to this plastic menace.

All everyone needs to do is put their rubbish in a nearby bin, failing that put it in your bag, leave it in your car or in your pocket and pop it in your bin at home.

Few people admit to dropping litter but it's a problem that everyone can see. All litter is unsightly and makes our local areas look untidy and uncared for.

Any type of litter takes a long time to disappear naturally. According to Keep Britain Tidy the estimated timespan for the following items to degrade is:

- Orange peel, banana skin, apple cores take up to up to 2 years – put them in your green bin to be shredded and used in compost.
- Plastic bags take up to 10 to 20 years – take them to your large local supermarket for recycling.
- Aluminium cans can take from 80 to 100 years – recycle them in your brown bin.
- Plastic bottles never degrade so put them in your brown bin for recycling.

There is no reason to drop litter, but when we see it in our streets, we can be proactive about it. Using the correct equipment we can pick it up and put it in the bin or we can notify Stockport Council, go to https://www.stockport.gov.uk/keeping-streets-clean/litter and report a street cleansing issue.

You can use this form to report issues with Litter, litter bins, dog fouling, broken glass, public toilets, leaves, dead animals on the footway as well as any dead animals found on the road (wild or pet animals)

For Fly-tipping go to https://www.stockport.gov.uk/start/report-a-fly-tipping-issue
It's an easy form to complete so please use it, the more we inform the council of litter and fly tipping the more they will be aware of the issues.
You can also call the council on **0161 217 6111** to make your complaint.

How can you help I hear you shout?
Make a start by signing up to the **Great British Spring Clean** - sign up at www.keepbritaintidy.org/our-work/eliminating-litter/great-british-spring-clean

Love where you live
KEEP BRITAIN TIDY

The 2026 Great British Spring Clean runs from 13-29 March over 400,000 people join in each year and the more people who join the bigger the impact will be.
You pledge to fill bin bags with litter collected from your local area.
Obviously, you can do this each week in your street and pop the rubbish in your bin, recycle all you can from what you collect. Wear good gloves and use a litter picker.

It's our town so let's try to keep it litter free by being Local Litters Pickers
LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE.

MARCH 2026

This March you could focus on Eco-friendly practices to support the environment whilst getting your garden Spring ready. Here are some tips to consider -

Go Peat Free – when purchasing compost, posted plants or seedling, please ensure they are in peat free soil to help maintain a healthy Eco system within your garden. Use your own compost or leaf mould as soil improvers.

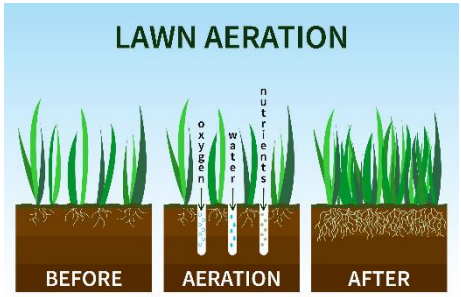


Sowing and Planting – Sowing involves putting seeds in the soil to germinate, planting refers to putting already germinated, established seedlings or plants into the soil. Sow and plant a variety of plants, vegetables and herbs, especially plants that are good for pollinators. If you are planting bulbs, cut an egg box up pop the bulb in a section, plant them in the soil, they stay upright and the box disintegrates quite quickly and helps to mulch the soil.

March is the time to sow hardy crops outdoors so broad beans, beetroot, carrots, parsnips, lettuce, spinach, radish and peas are perfect for this time of year. Plant early potatoes and onion sets, also hardy annual flowers such as Cosmos.

Pruning and planting – prune flowering climbers and shrubs late to shape and promote growth, plant new climbers such as clematis and honeysuckle. Prune your apple and pear trees. Cut back winter flowering shrubs and ornamental grasses





Maintain your lawn – rake the lawn over to remove dead leaves and debris, trim the edges for a neat look, aerate compacted areas to improve drainage. All this will help your lawn grow lush and green ready for NO MOW MAY.

Hopefully by incorporating these eco tips into your garden routine, you can contribute to a healthier environment and support sustainable gardening practice.

Using ideas from RHS, Dennis' 7 Dees, Lawsons, Stauffers.

The Boys' Brigade launches alumni network to connect generations



The Boys' Brigade wants to get in touch with former members to celebrate more than 140 years of shaping young lives

The organisation wants to connect with previous members to share their stories of how The Boys' Brigade (BB) helped prepare them for their lives and careers. To do so, it has launched a new alumni scheme (https://alumni.boys-brigade.org.uk).

But the new scheme "isn't just about reminiscing about the past", the organisation states, "it is about giving you the chance to reconnect with us and help build a stronger future as The Boys' Brigade heads towards our 150th anniversary."

The Boys' Brigade (BB) was founded in 1883 and today works with 1,200 churches of all denominations.

For generations, BB has provided 'opportunities to learn, grow and discover", and this positive influence "is as important and as relevant today as ever."

BB trustee Andrew Baldwin says, "One of the things that always makes me smile is hearing stories of people's connections to the organisation. There is a huge BB community out there – across the UK and around the world.

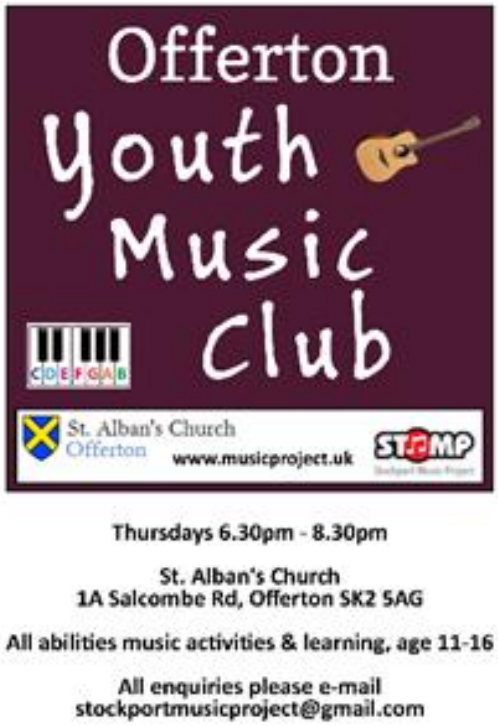
"Former members are in every walk of life. We want to hear your stories, and the part that The Boys' Brigade played in your life.

"The alumni scheme gives us the chance to reconnect and build a stronger future, as we head towards our 150th anniversary."

As one former BB boy said: 'BB taught me how to become a leader, a good man and a better person. It pushed me to see what I was capable of. It gave me drive. I wouldn't be the person I am today if it hadn't been for The Boys' Brigade.'

Cycle of Prayer

This month we pray for the staff and children at our local nurseries and we pray for the people of Somalia affected by drought and political problems.







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!

15th March – The daughters of mothers



There are certain small things that you notice,
Little things you have started to do,
That prompt you to question, and wonder
If the face in the mirror, is *you.*

The realisation is dawning,
As one year hurtles after another,
That in word, thought and deed,
In gesture and glance,
You have somehow turned into your mother!

By Daphne Kitching

Stockport Multi-Faith Network Stockport



Welcome to the very first edition of the Stockport Multi-Faith Network Newsletter! Our aim is simple: to share helpful, educational insights about different faiths, highlight upcoming religious celebrations, and keep you updated on relevant events taking place across Stockport and Greater Manchester. As we move into a period filled with significant religious observances, including Ramadan, Lent, Passover, and Easter, we're grateful to our multi-faith members for offering reflections and information from within their own traditions.

Lent - Written by Reverend Raj Patt

You will find a copy on the Welcome table

Passion reading at Puss in Boots

on Mon 30th March, Tues 31st March and Wed 1st April

of Holy Week at 10am.

All welcome – bring a bible.







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)