

Keep in touch with St Alban's Church

Revd. Marie Flint

Parish Office: 0161 477 0456

(Mon & Fri 9.30-12.30)



Church in the community Matt 5:14-16, Acts 2:44-47, Phil 2:3-5

MAY 2025

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 and X and
www.achurchnearyou.com

Marie Writes- Why pray?



Our prayers often seem like a list of things that we'd like God to do – a shopping list of things to try get God to change His mind. But prayer is more of a conversation than a shopping list – a time for purposefully abiding in God's presence and for listening as well. Perhaps God even uses prayer to change our minds!

Just before He teaches His disciples the Lord's Prayer, Jesus says that God 'knows what you need before you ask Him' (Matthew 6:8). So, what is the point, if God knows our needs anyway? God knows our needs, but we don't. Prayer teaches us what to want and how to live and what to pray for.

Prayer is the foundation of our Christian lives. Prayer is for God – for God's adoration and praise and it strengthens our relationship with God. It becomes a way of life; a way of being as we acknowledge God's sovereignty. We seek God's way. We discover God's vision. And we pray for others that they may know this too.

Every year, between Pentecost and Ascension, (happening this year between 28th May and 8th June) Christians across the globe are invited to pray Holy Novena, as part of the Thy Kingdom Come prayer initiative. Holy Novena is a period of 9 days when we pray the same prayer every day. For Thy Kingdom come, we pray just that – that God's Kingdom would reign on earth as it is in heaven, as we each commit to praying for 5 people we know to come to know Jesus and begin their own relationship with God. This year, Thy Kingdom Come celebrates 10 years and the theme is praying the Lord's Prayer. A booklet helping us to pray each day during this time of Holy Novena has been produced. Written by the Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell, it is available to download from www.thykingdomcome.global.

There are many ways to pray and there is no right or wrong way to do it. God knows our hearts, so there's no stupid thing to say or think. Some people might prefer praying in groups and some people might prefer to sit alone in the quiet. For some people, singing a rousing worship song works. For some people having something to focus on helps, like a candle or a cross. And for some people something sensory to hold onto or to smell is preferred. Some people might pray when they're doing something creative like music, art or crafts. Some people pray when they're out running or walking the dog. Some people pray through scripture or liturgy and some people are spontaneous. Whatever it is that helps you to connect to God, please do consider who the 5 people are that you will pray for between Pentecost and Ascension and commit to making that prayer daily.

We have recently introduced an extra opportunity to pray together at St. Alban's on a Thursday evening at 5.30pm in church. Do come along if you are free. It is also possible to join this Thursday evening prayer via zoom. Please email Marie at revmarieflint@gmail.com if you would like the zoom link to join.

With my prayers for you for a prayerful and fruitful Holy Novena,

Rev'd Marie

What happens at a healing service?



Common worship states that *"Baptism witnesses to God's gift of salvation, in which he gathers people into the new creation in Jesus Christ. Baptism points to the way in which God in Jesus Christ is overthrowing an order of life corrupted by sin and death and bringing to birth a renewed creation, a creation alive with the healing presence of God's*

Spirit. Baptism is a sign of individual and corporate forgiveness and renewal within the life of the baptized. That life proclaims not only the risen power won by Christ for us in his resurrection and exaltation, but also our identification as human beings with the constraints and suffering borne by Christ in his incarnation and on the cross.

With the incarnation of Jesus, God begins the renewal of our alienated, weakened and fragmented human condition (Romans 8.3,4). In St Matthew's Gospel Jesus' baptism expresses his solidarity with us in our weakness (Matthew 3.14,15) and his healing ministry is seen as the outworking of the suffering servant who 'took our infirmities and bore our diseases' (Matthew 8.17). The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ promise both the judgement of all that is flawed in human life and the recreation of our humanity. A powerful biblical image portrays the sufferings of the Messiah, of the creation, and of God's people, as the birth pains that herald the new age in which peace and righteousness reign (Luke 12.50; John 16.21; Romans 8.18-30; Colossians 1.24; Revelation 12). The Christ, the anointed one, is clothed with the Holy Spirit to bring good news to the afflicted and to proclaim the day of the Lord's favour (Luke 4.18-21). It is apparent in Scripture that the physical, emotional, social and spiritual well-being of human beings are closely interconnected. Christ's work of reconciliation extends beyond the purely personal and relational to the social order and the whole creation (cf Colossians 1.15-27). The Gospels use the term 'healing' both for physical healing and for the broader salvation that Jesus brings. A common New Testament term for sickness is 'weakness' (asthenia) (Luke 5.15; 13.11,12; John 5.5); it carries broad associations of powerlessness and vulnerability, including human vulnerability in the face of the dominion of sin and death (Romans 5.6; 8.3). As Christians face weakness, they receive God's grace, expressed sometimes in an experience of healing and sometimes through the strength that comes in the bearing of weakness (2 Corinthians 12.9).

Furthermore, the New Testament also presents us with a picture of Christians in a running battle with forces of evil that are external to us but bear heavily upon our lives. Although the principalities and powers (Ephesians 6.12) are not always forces of evil, they can have an impact on the social and political order; the evil one not only brings temptation but takes people captive (Gospels, passim); the power of idols enslaves consciences (1 Corinthians 8); and pagan sacrifices are offered to demons with whom we must not be participants (1 Corinthians 10). This series of pictures, while not absolving us from personal responsibility for our actions, also strongly implies that without the grace of God we are at risk of being in the grip of an array of forces beyond our powers to resist or break. Yet there is victory in Christ, and we also learn that, in the final analysis, 'an idol is nothing in the world and there is no God but one' (1 Corinthians 8.4); and that victorious discernment categorizes all forces of

spiritual evil as provisional and counterfeit. Their 'power' lies in their impact on us, and their 'reality' therefore is shadowy and interim only. But we nonetheless need deliverance from that power, and the language of healing and wholeness is entirely appropriate to that process.

Acts of healing in the Gospels are intimately related to the restoring of individuals to a place of worth within the social order (cf Mark 1.44; 5.15-20; 6.32-34; Luke 13.10-17). 'By his wounds you have been healed' (1 Peter 2.24) makes powerful links between human pain and vulnerability and the saving impact of Jesus' own suffering. The same interconnectedness is present where Scripture speaks of God's image in us to point to the way human life is marred and threatened by the impact of evil and is restored by the new creation in Christ (Romans 3.23; 2 Corinthians 3.18; Ephesians 2.13-16).

Healing, reconciliation and restoration are integral to the good news of Jesus Christ. For this reason prayer for individuals, focused through laying on of hands or anointing with oil, has a proper place within the public prayer of the Church. God's gracious activity of healing is to be seen both as part of the proclaiming of the good news and as an outworking of the presence of the Spirit in the life of the Church."

Our **healing service**, which happens at **St. Alban's on the first Wednesday of the month at 10.30am** is a gentle, sensitive service of prayer, reflection and holy communion where people are invited to receive prayers for healing with the laying of hands, if they wish. People can even receive laying on of hands, on behalf of someone else. We pray for wholeness and healing for ourselves, others and the whole world, recognising that we are all in need of healing and that there is not a simple link between sickness and sin. We recognise that sickness and suffering is often linked to social injustice and also the value of medicine in physical healing. People who come to the service say that they feel touched by the Holy Spirit. It is a way of partaking in God's new life that will not be complete until it includes the whole creation and the destruction of death itself. Why don't you come along to the service once a month and be refreshed?

Rev'd Marie

Lent course at the Strawberry Gardens



We had a fabulous time during our Lent course, learning and growing together with our brothers and sisters from our local Methodist and Catholic churches. We can't wait to do it again!

Were you married at St. Alban's?



Since 1893, weddings have been celebrated at St. Alban's. Was yours one of them? Or do you know someone else who was married here? Perhaps your parents, or grandparents? To celebrate **St. Alban's Day** this year, we will be opening church for the day on **Saturday 21st June** and inviting the community to come and view a display of all weddings that have taken place at our church over the years. If you have any wedding photos, orders of service or other items that you wouldn't mind lending for the display, we would love to include them. We can scan your photos and print copies so as not to damage them. Perhaps you still have your wedding dress, or suit, or silk flowers from the day? Perhaps you'd like to write a few lines about your experience and favourite memories about attending a wedding at St. Alban's. If anyone has a tailor's mannequin that they're able to lend, that too would be greatly appreciated. We'd love to be able to offer a warm welcome to the Offerton community on the day too, so please put the date in your diary and come along and help out.

Remembering those who have mothered us

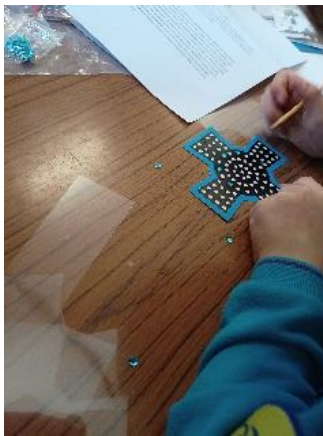


On Mothering Sunday we remembered the people who have mothered us,
but are no longer with us by placing roses in vases.

April Messy church



Our April activities were centred around Easter



Easter 'Smellie' bags for the residents of Bruce Lodge.



Some perks of getting old

- Things you buy now won't wear out.
- You can eat supper at 4 pm
- Your eyes won't get much worse.
- Your secrets are safe with your friends – because they can't remember them either.



School children's Experience Easter at Church

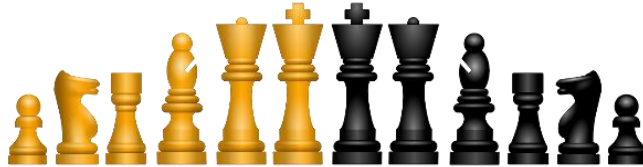


The week before Holy Week we had the pleasure of welcoming 150 local school children to St Alban's to 'Experience Easter'. Walking through an interactive story trail the children learnt about the events of Holy Week and discovered why we get so excited about Easter as Christians.



Editor: Nigel Beeton writes:

I admit it – I am a Wordle / Quordle / Octordle addict! Those online games where you have to find the five-letter word. Great fun. Except that, perhaps you, like me, will remember those far-off days when we actually played games with people?



Artificial Opponents?

Wordles and Quordles and Octordles too,
Who can be bored with so much to do?
Puzzles online, and less now in print
Is it surprising that I'm starting to squint?

Crosswords and lost words in a grid you must find
Sudoku, Kakuro for the numerate mind,
Backgammon or chess, if that is your sport
And card games of every conceivable sort!

Deep in my cupboard is a box full of games
And a beautiful chess set, abandoned – a shame!
But do you remember (long ago as it seems),
When we played games with people, and not these machines?

By Nigel Beeton

MAY 2025 Newsletter



Preparing for NO MOW MAY

Ideas from www.plantlife.org.uk

Take the first step!

Whether this is your first year or you're a **NO MOW MAY** veteran, you will be contributing to a national movement to bring colour and life back to our green spaces.

Our lawns can be a riot of organisms, bursting into life, coexisting to make our world a more beautiful place. Below your lawn is a complex world of fungi and microbes living among the roots. Above the soil, plants shelter, feed, and support all kinds of beasties from insects to birds and mammals. Our valuable green spaces can be teeming with life across the seasons – if we only give them a little room to grow, and it will look pretty too.



What to do next year to prepare.

Is your April lawn already abundant with early wildflowers. If so, please avoid doing your first mow this month, and in the future mow in early March, with a blade setting high enough to pass over the emerging leaves of your spring flowers.

Most wildflowers make their best start to the season from a short lawn. Next year start your **NO MOW MAY** prep in late Autumn with a close mow as grass can smother wildflower seedlings growing slowly through autumn and winter, then make a short mow in early March. A good time to do this is when the grass is reasonably dry, don't forget to collect your cuttings so the lawn doesn't get clogged with debris

May means flowers, the start of your garden being full of brilliant blooms, colour and life until well into Autumn. Giving some lawns a high monthly cut will let shorter flowers multiply, boosting nectar production. Leaving other areas longer will support tall plant species, which feed and shelter an array of animal life. Some completely untouched grassy strips left along hedgerows and fences will create effective ecological corridors along which wildlife can move. Variety is key for a wilder garden! You chose your areas and let nature flourish.



Short lawns, these are mown once every four weeks or so, allowing smaller plants such as Daisies and Bird's-foot-trefoil to flower in profusion, providing a fabulous food source. This will also attract many insects, such as mining bees that create their burrows in the ground.



Some parts of your garden need to be kept short, such as paths and recreational lawns for playing. Think carefully about where, and how large, these patches need to be. A reduction in mowing will have huge effect on the number of flowering plants in your garden and give wildlife that much needed support throughout the summer.

Tips for Nature-friendly Mowing



After **NO MOW MAY** a flowering lawn can be high level mowed once every 4-8 weeks with cut grass collected.

Mowing around the edges towards the centre leaves wildlife no escape route and creates a 'killing zone'. Mow gradually towards sanctuary areas such as uncut grass strips at boundaries, making a high level cut first, leave your low-level cuts until late in the Autumn

Be blooming proud of yourself

Making longer-term changes in mowing will do much more for nature, you will see biodiversity blossoming across the seasons. Over time, more and more plants will arrive, long-term participation in **NO MOW MAY** over consecutive years will see the greatest benefits for nature.

This is your chance to join in **NO MOW MAY**. Plan the areas you are going to leave wild or just devote your entire lawn or the whole of your garden to wildlife. Do as little as possible and see your garden flourish.



May 2025

Make a difference to the environment with these easy tasks

Plant a tree – even a small one. Trees are brilliant at drawing down carbon from the atmosphere. If every UK gardener planted a small tree in their garden and nurtured it to maturity, they would store enough carbon equivalent to drive you more than 11 million times around our planet.



Peatlands are the world's largest carbon store on earth. They provide valuable ecosystems for plants and animals and act like sponges, reducing the risk of flooding.

When we take peat for our gardens, carbon is released and habitats are damaged. Keeping peat in bogs – not bags – is a crucial part of the fight against

climate change. Our planet's billions of acres of peat hold more carbon than all the world's forests combined. **Use peat free soil to plant your flowers and grow your seeds.**

Switch from mains to rains in your garden to save carbon.

Use a water butt containing water that falls onto your roof instead of turning on a tap from the mains supply, or use a watering can instead of a hosepipe.



Garden soils and perennial plantings play an important role in storing carbon.

If the UK's 30 million gardeners pulled up a paver and planted 1m² of perennial plants in their garden and allowed it to develop to maturity, this could be equivalent to heating between 86,000 to more than one million homes for a year!

Carbon saving quantities linked to home composting are equivalent to 1.85 miles saved per kg of home compost made. Every 1kg of homemade compost typically saves over 0.1kg fossil CO₂ emissions, which could save more than 5.1 kg carbon, per gardener, every year.



Pollinators need our help. Loss of habitat is one of the main reasons why we see fewer bees, butterflies and other insects visiting our gardens.

Help slow and reverse the declines in bees, butterflies, moths, hoverflies and other pollinators by growing a wide variety of plants including a mixture of plants to support pollinator diversity.

ideas from www.rhs.org.uk

Palm Sunday



Open your mouth

My dentist is also our choir leader at church. He likes the hymn: "Crown Him With Many Crowns."



AUDREY FLETCHER nee McKay

27.6.1927-16.3.2025

STANLEY GERBERT FLETCHER

1928-23.3.2020



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Audrey Fletcher, a well-loved lady of the parish who passed away at Moss Cottage Nursing Home in Ashton Under Lyne aged 97. Her funeral was held on 31.3.2025 at Barnsley Crematorium, Ardsley.

Audrey was born in Stockport on 27 June 1927, her parents were Arthur Alexander McKay and Doris Fantom who married at St Albans in 1926. She was the eldest of 4 children her siblings being Duncan, Shelia and Anthea.

Audrey was married to Stanley Gerbert Fletcher at St Albans in 1965 – Stan passed away after a short illness in hospital on 23.3.2020 aged 91, as it was the beginning of Covid there were no family or friends allowed at the cremation. He was born in North Manchester in 1928 – only child of Alfred Micklewright Fletcher and Florence Audrey Gerbert who married in Stockport in 1926.



Audrey and Stan were well loved and highly respected members of our church family. Audrey immersed herself into Offerton life, she was Brown Owl at 1st Offerton Brownies from 1947 – 1978 and worked as an infant teacher at Banks Lane School, she was also the Chair of Governors at St Stephens from 1949-1978. Many of the people in our parish will have either been taught by her or had her as their Brown Owl, I know I was.

God bless them both

Janet



Roughley's Egg Run



Thank you to everyone who donated Easter eggs for The Together Trust. The eggs went on Roughley's egg run with David from Memories Funeral Services Ltd (pictured here on his trike) on 6th April before being distributed via the charity. We collected loads as a church community and they will have certainly blessed the lives of a great number of children



Cycle of Prayer

This month we pray for the people who work in our local businesses, and we pray for people living in Afghanistan. Since the return of the power of the Taliban regime, international aid has disappeared in a context where the country suffers from drought or flooding.



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

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!



Stockport Deanery synod news briefing - April 2025

Rural dean Rev Canon Elaine Chegwin Hall retired at the end of March 2025. So, the diocese will appoint a local deanery clergy member to take her place as rural Dean.

Peter Hall has also retired as our Deanery Chair, so we will need to elect a lay member as chair.

Rev Josh Askwith currently vicar of Norbury and representative on general synod, will be moving on to take up his new position as Canon Pastor at St Asaph's Cathedral.

Stockport Deanery would like to congratulate Josh on his new appointment. Besides this we will miss Josh as will Norbury church for his outstanding work at Norbury and his work on our behalf of general synod we wish to convey thanks and best wishes to Josh and his family.

Likewise, I would like to thank Elaine and Peter for their work on our behalf as Rural Dean and Deanery Chair, their leadership and extensive knowledge of so many different aspects of church protocols, and extensive understanding of our place in the modern world has been a great asset to us all, and all this combined with good humour has made our deanery meetings lively, interesting and educational.

Our deanery would like to express a debt of gratitude to both Elaine and Peter.
Many thanks from us all and very best wishes in your retirement.

Deanery Synod meetings 2025 at 7.30pm

Month	Location	Prayers	Speaker and subject
Wednesday 19 th November	St Albans		

Deanery Confirmation/ preaching dates 2025

Month	Location	Bishop
Sunday 27 th April at 10.30am	St Matthew's	Mark [preaching only]
Sunday 22 nd June at 10.30am	St Alban's	Mark

DG



ST ALBAN'S CHURCH OFFERTON AND
STOCKPORT SILVER BAND PROUDLY PRESENT

BRASS, BREWS & BAKES

a fundraising evening of entertaining brass
band music with cake and brews

Saturday 10th May
7.30pm

at St. Alban's Parish Hall,
Offerton Lane, SK2 5AG

Tickets £10 on the door
£5 concessions

www.stockportsilver.co.uk
www.stalbanofferton.org.uk

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 & St. John's

Sunday

9.00am Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer (1st Sunday only)
10.30am Holy Communion (children's club 3rd Sunday)

Tuesday

10.30am Praise & Play (term time)

Wednesday

10.30am Holy Communion – St John's (2nd, 3rd and 4th Wed)
10.30am Healing Service- St Alban's (1st Wed of month)
1.00-3.00pm Bereavement Café (1st Wednesday only)

Thursday

2.00-4.00pm Craft Club
6.30-8.30pm Youth Music Group (term time)

Saturday

10.00am-12.00pm Gardening club (1st Saturday of month)
3.30pm-5.30pm Messy Church (1st Saturday of month)