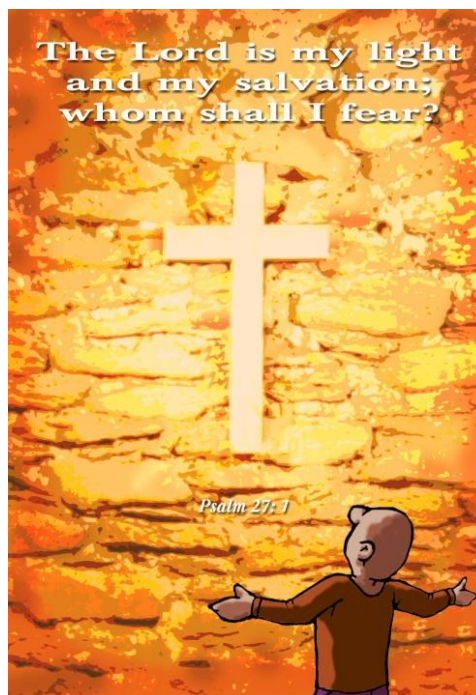


**Keep in touch
with
St Alban's Church**

Revd. Marie Flint

Parish Office: 0161 477 0456

(Mon & Fri 9.30-12.30)



February 2024

To Contact the Church.....

Parish Office: 0161 477 0456
Email: stalbanofferton@gmail.com

Priest: Revd. Marie Flint
0161 480 3773
revmarieflint@gmail.com

Churchwardens	Eileen Comerford	0161 480 4235
	David Griffiths	07505122531
Treasurer	David Haslam	
Secretary	Janet Renshaw	
Reader	Brenda Baxendale	
Safeguarding	Jen Sadler	
	safeguard@stalbans@gmail.com	

You can find lots of information about the church and its activities on our Parish Website:

www.stalbanofferton.org.uk



St. Alban's Church Offerton

Also on Instagram, X and www.achurchnearyou.com

Marie writes -



I am feeling particularly encouraged by all that is happening at St. Alban's at the moment, particularly after our Christmas services and celebrations, where we have been blessed with a great number of people coming through our doors.

I've met some wonderful people and have had some great conversations. The PCC and congregation have worked so hard, with cheer and enthusiasm to ensure people receive a good welcome and I pray that all who come to church, for whatever reason, encounter the living God.

We have also been able to bless our community with our charity giving and are about to launch our children's clothing bank.

We are working towards our Eco Church award this year. It really feels like God is at work in Offerton and we are truly blessed.

As we enter the season of lent, our gospel reading for the first Sunday of lent (Mark 1:9-15) takes us to the wilderness as we remember Jesus' own time in the desert, being tempted for 40 days.

I am aware that for some of us it may not feel like a time of blessing. We might be feeling like we are in the wilderness too. Perhaps life has thrown some testing stuff at us. Perhaps we feel a little abandoned by God.

When Jesus found himself in the wilderness it was immediately after a time of great blessing. There's a sharp transition between one moment when Jesus is having the transformative spiritual experience of baptism where God declares 'You are my child. I love you. I'm pleased with you' and being thrown out into the desert with only Satan and the wild beasts for company. By entering the wilderness, Jesus was called to occupy the space

between blessings, and it is a necessary place for him to be before he can begin his ministry. In this in-between place Jesus is tempted to grasp at glory and claim victory but instead responds with endurance, faithfulness, and reliance on God's provision from the angels. God's angels are a reminder that the Father was with him, loving him constantly, watching over him, acting through him and pouring out his spirit all the time in him and through him.

It would seem that the wilderness is a necessary place even if we don't quite understand its purpose, and we too are called to respond with faithfulness, endurance, and reliance on God's provision.

As we inhabit this in-between place of lent, we remember that we are not alone. When we feel lonely or abandoned, we remember that we are not alone. When we feel like God seems distant or our purpose unsure, we remember that we are not alone. God is with us. God is with us - watching over us, loving us and pouring out his spirit all the time in and through us. This lent, might we remember that we might just be in-between blessings, as we look forward to celebrating the greatest blessing that is the risen Christ on that glorious Easter morn. Might we respond to our own wilderness times by remembering the words spoken by the Father at Jesus' baptism "You are my child. I love you. I'm pleased with you".

Our Ash Wednesday service this year, to mark the beginning of lent will be at St. John's Church on Wednesday 14th February at 10.30am and we will be joined by our Christian sisters and brothers from Dialstone Lane Methodist Church.

We'll be blessed with their company too, at our joint lent course, which will be on Monday nights during lent from 7.30pm, starting on Monday 19th February at Dialstone Lane Methodist Church. I do hope you can join us as we negotiate the wilderness together and try to make sense of the blessings and the in-between blessings, using a course called 'Glimpses of God: Hope for Today's World' by David Winter.

This lent, and always, may you know the presence of God in your lives.

Rev'd Marie

Commissioning our new Safeguarding Officer

We were delighted to commission our new Parish safeguarding officer

Jen Sadler on 10th December and to pray for her ministry.

If you have any safeguarding concerns Jen can be contacted by emailing

safeguardatstalbans@gmail.com.



Christingle Service



It was a fantastic turn out for our Christingle Service, the church was packed – thank you to all those who joined us. If you couldn't make it you missed a treat with our vicar Marie 'building' a Christingle out of our reader Brenda.

Our Christmas Fair on 9th December

Thanks to all those who attended and contributed to our Christmas Fair. We raised over £700.



St Alban's going for Bronze in 2024

February Dates for your Diary

2nd February - Candlemas commemorates the ritual purification of Mary, 40 days after the birth of her son Jesus. This day also marks the ritual presentation of the baby Jesus to God in the Temple at Jerusalem. Many Christians will bring candles to their church to be blessed.



4th February – British Yorkshire Pudding Day – make sure you have roast beef with Yorkshire pudding, or you could have jam on your Yorkshire pudding and have it as a desert *mmm YUMMY*

10th February — is the beginning of the Chinese New Year. It culminates in the Lantern Festival on 24th February. 2024 is the Year of the Dragon- a symbol of power and luck.

14th February - Ash Wednesday – Christians attend special Ash Wednesday church services, at which churchgoers receive ash on their foreheads. The ashes are prepared by burning palm leaves from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebrations. It is preceded by Shrove Tuesday and marks the first day of Lent, the six weeks of penitence before Easter.



ASH WEDNESDAY

14th February - Valentines Day - when lovers express their affection with greetings and gifts.



22nd February - Thinking Day - *Our World, Our Thriving Future Together, we can make a positive impact on our world and ensure that all girls thrive* It is a day when all Girl Guides think about their "sisters" (and "brothers") in all the countries of the world, the meaning of Guiding, and its global impact.

28th February - Inconvenience Yourself Day is dedicated to putting other people first and going out of your way to help. Go on - Give it a go.

Get Outside in Lent – and spend more time in nature.

Being out in nature will help you connect with God as Creator and celebrate his creation in different ways over the Lenten period, enjoy being outside, take time to connect with nature, either by yourself or with friends. Lent runs from 14th February to 30th March this year, a forty-day period of self-reflection, exploration, and discovery, when we try to grow nearer to the Heart of God and recapture a sense of wonder. Here's weeks 1-3 of our ideas, weeks 4-6 will be in the March Newsletter.

Week One – Flower and Vegetable Seeds

14th - 20th February

Plant your seeds in peat free compost, water them, look after them and watch them grow, when they are stronger, and the weather gets warmer you can plant them in your garden or bring them to church and we can plant them in our Eco Church planter.

If you cannot do this, try planting some cress seeds on a damp tissue. Look at them every day to see how they are growing. The cress should be ready for you to cut and eat in a couple of weeks' time.

Prayer for Flowers/vegetables –

Creator God, thank you for seeds to grow, and the beauty that flowers bring to our world, for vegetables and the lives they support, and for the part they play in your creation. We are sorry for the times when we have not noticed the beauty of the flowers around us. Help us to value flowers and vegetables as part of your creation; not just for what they can give us, but simply because you made them, and you love them. Amen.

Week Two - Soil - 21st – 27th February

If you have a garden, take a handful of soil, feel it, and smell it. How would you describe it?

Go for a walk and notice all the things that are growing around you, both wild and in people's gardens.



Prayer for Soil - Creator God, thank you for soil, that the flowers and food that we plant will grow in it, as well as beauty and enjoyment of the plants. Please help people in those places where growing food is difficult because soil and growing conditions are poor and forgive us for the times when we have forgotten to remember them. Help us to value soil as part of your creation; not just for what it can give us, but simply because you made it and you love it. Amen.



Week Three - Go Hug a tree – 28th February – 5th March



Whether it's a small tree in your garden or a huge tree in the park - go give it a hug or take your friends out and hug a bigger tree



and each other – you'll feel so much better for it and so will your friends and the tree will feel loved too. Don't be shy now, this will get you in practice for National Love a tree day on May 16th.

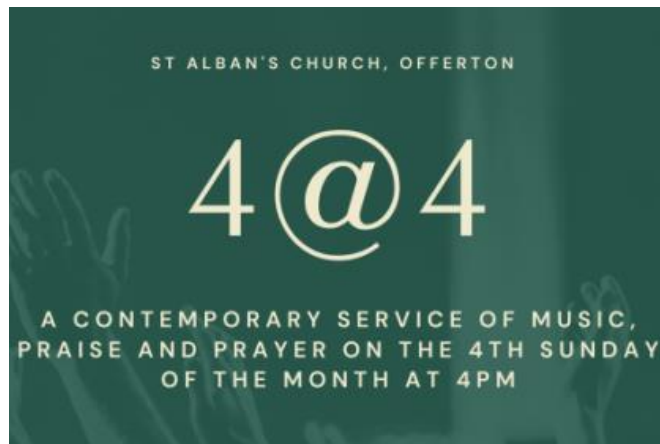
Also put in your diary National Tree Week – November 27-December 5, 2024.

During that week we will be planting a few small trees in the church grounds.

Prayer for Trees - Creator God, thank you for trees. Thank you for the beauty that they bring to our world, for the life that they support, and for the part that they play in your creation. We are sorry for those places around the world where people have destroyed trees because they are greedy for something else. Help us to value trees as part of your creation not just for what they can give us, but because you made them, and you love them. Amen

Look out for the last 3 weeks of Creation Lent in the March Newsletter

Thanks *Janet*



- 25th Feb – Jesus – his life and ministry
- 24th March – Jesus enters Jerusalem
- 28th April – Jesus' death and resurrection.



Christmas Raffle

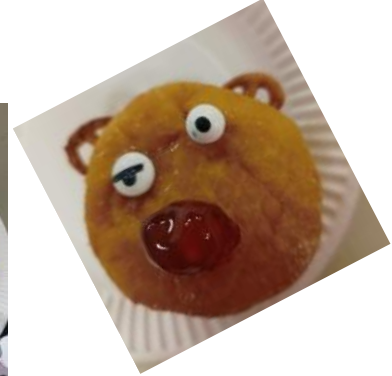
Many thanks to Jen's Childminding Offerton and Eloise Spa and Beauty treatment for organising our Christmas Raffle, which raised £202 for church.

A really big thank you to the following local businesses who donated the prizes.

- x2 £100 Sainsbury's Vouchers from Manley Lettings & Property Management
- 30 minute massage from Eloise Spa and Beauty
- Sweet pouch from That Sweet Spot
- Cold Cup from Fearne Design
- Pamper gift set from Belle Therapies
- Crystal Healing Treatment from Pollyanna Power Healing
- Exercise class passes from Gill Hunt
- Party ponytail from Bee Beautiful
- BIAB manicure from Cuticles & Co
- Prosecco, chocolates and voucher from A & PE Baker / Hempshaw Lane Post Office

Messy Church – November

November activities included making a clay manger, advent calendar, nativity Christmas tree biscuit, Christmas box, angel cards, a gnome decoration and edible reindeer





**Offerton Fire
fighters visit to
Praise and Play**



Some of our lovely helpers with Father Christmas at the praise and play party



Messy Church - January

Messy church for January had a Ship theme centred on fellowship, worship, discipleship, and stewardship. It included activities making camel cupcakes, flags, a stained-glass window, wax boats, bead fish, friendship bracelet, decoupage cross, orangutang spinner and Christian and non-Christian symbols.



I've been replaced by a Robot!



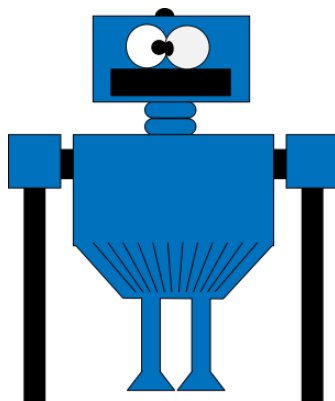
I've been replaced by a robot –
His name is 'Chat GPT.'
He is a poet of a robot –
And that's what troubles me.

He can read in a moment
Shakespeare, Keats, and Lear –
More in that one single moment
Than I can read in a year!

He has an acceptable metre;
His work runs quite nicely to time,<
His work gets neater and neater!
And he is quite good with a rhyme!

In fact, so good is his manner
The robot is quite hard to see:
So, I'll have to dumb down my grammar:
"This poem, it woz writ by me!"

By Nigel Beeton



1st February -Seiriol – Saint of Puffin Island



St. Seiriol's Well

You can find traces of old saints in most corners of the British Isles, but Seiriol is one of the only two saints connected to Anglesey, and certainly the ONLY saint connected to Puffin Island.

It was back in the 6th century that this gentle abbot first settled in Penmon, and built a little church. His ruined beehive cell still survives there today, as does the well from which he drew water, both for his own use, and also for baptising local people.

Like many other Celtic saints, Seiriol would have travelled by sea. So he felt comfortable near the coast on Anglesey, on low-lying land. Although he lived as a simple hermit, Seiriol soon attracted followers, and eventually he decided to establish a small monastery. He chose to build it on nearby Ynys Seiriol, now called Puffin Island.

That little monastery on Puffin Island saw some scary action in 632, when Edwin of Northumbria was chasing the Welsh king, Cadwallon, and ended up besieging him on the island. Cadwallon was finally conquered, and history moved on, but the monastic ruins of Seiriol's little monastery are still there today. Seiriol seems to have been a purely local saint who never attracted a very great number of followers. The only known dedications to him are at Penmon and Puffin Island. But Seiriol's life and work are still a testimony today. He is a gentle and encouraging reminder of what an impact even a simple local Christian can achieve, by simply being faithful to Jesus Christ in the place where he is.

Saint Seiriol is commemorated on the 1st February in both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

14th February - St. Valentine's Day



St Valentine's Day, many believe, was named after one or more Christian martyrs and was established by Pope Gelasius 1 in 496 AD. Valentine of Rome was martyred about 269, and this day usually 'belongs' to him.

The first recorded association of Valentine Day with romantic love (1382) is from Geoffrey Chaucer. He wrote, 'For this was on Saint Valentine's Day, When every fowl comes there his mate to take,'. This poem was in honour of the first anniversary of the engagement of King Richard II of England to Anne of Bohemia.

Valentine Day is referred to by Ophelia in Hamlet (1600-1601).

*To-morrow is St Valentine's day
All in the morning betime
And I a maid at your window
To be your Valentine.*

The modern mention of Valentine's Day can be found in a collection of English nursery rhymes (1784):

*The rose is red, the violet's blue
The honey's sweet, and so are you.
Thou are my love and I am thine
I drew thee to my Valentine.*

*Happy
Valentine's
Day*

Romance, love, marriage and all that stuff

the way children see it....

How would you make a marriage work?

Tell your wife that she looks pretty, even if she looks like a lorry. – Ricky, age 10

What do most people do on a date?

Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each other. Even boys have something to say, if you listen long enough. – Lynnette, age 8

How can a stranger tell if two people are married?

You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids. – Derrick, age 8



St Alban's Warm Space

This has begun and will continue until the end of March 2024

Every Friday in the Galilee

10am – 12pm

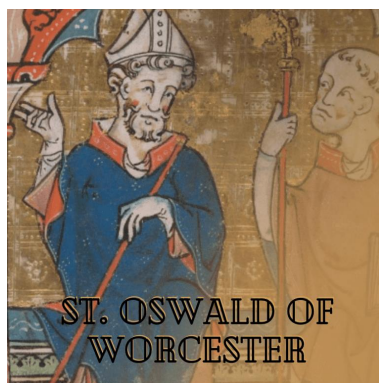
Come for a warm, hot drinks, biscuits, and a lovely chat.

Board Games, jigsaws and crafts if you wish

A WARM WELCOME FOR ALL



29th February - Oswald of Worcester- the Saint for Leap Year



There is a saint for Leap Year. He is St Oswald of Worcester, who died on 29th February 992. His family story was extraordinary, and full of some surprising 'leaps', all by itself. It provides a tantalising glimpse of what happened to at least one of those pagan Viking warriors who settled in Anglo-Saxon Britain.

For Oswald's great-uncle had come to England c 865, as part of the 'Great Heathen Army' of Viking invaders. But his son, Oswald's uncle, Oda, forsook paganism, and not only converted to Christianity, but actually ended up as Archbishop of Canterbury. From there, Oda was in a position to help his nephew, Oswald, which he did. Oda sent young Oswald to be educated at the abbey of Fleury, then a great centre of learning. There Oswald absorbed the Benedictine ideals which would guide his later life and work. Back in England, he became bishop of Worcester in 961, and with the support of King Edgar, eagerly joined in major reforms of the Anglo-Saxon church. In 972 Oswald was made Archbishop of York and seems to have taken a great interest in renewing the church in the Danelaw. He founded Ramsey Abbey, which became one of the great Fenland monasteries.

Oswald was popular as an archbishop, and always washed the feet of the poor every Lent. On 29th February 992 he had just completed this service at Worcester when he collapsed and died. In later years, Worcester adopted both him and Wulfstan to be its two chief saints: they flank the tomb of King John, which is before the high altar in the cathedral.

Welcome



We welcome into our church family -
Jade Mary Costello and Scarlet Joanne Costello
Who were baptised on 14th January 2024

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
- 4pm 4@4 a contemporary service of music, praise and Prayer (last Sunday of the Month)

Tuesday

- 10.30am Praise & Play

Wednesday

- 10.30am Holy Communion – St John's

Friday

- 10.00am Coffee morning including WARM SPACE

Saturday

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