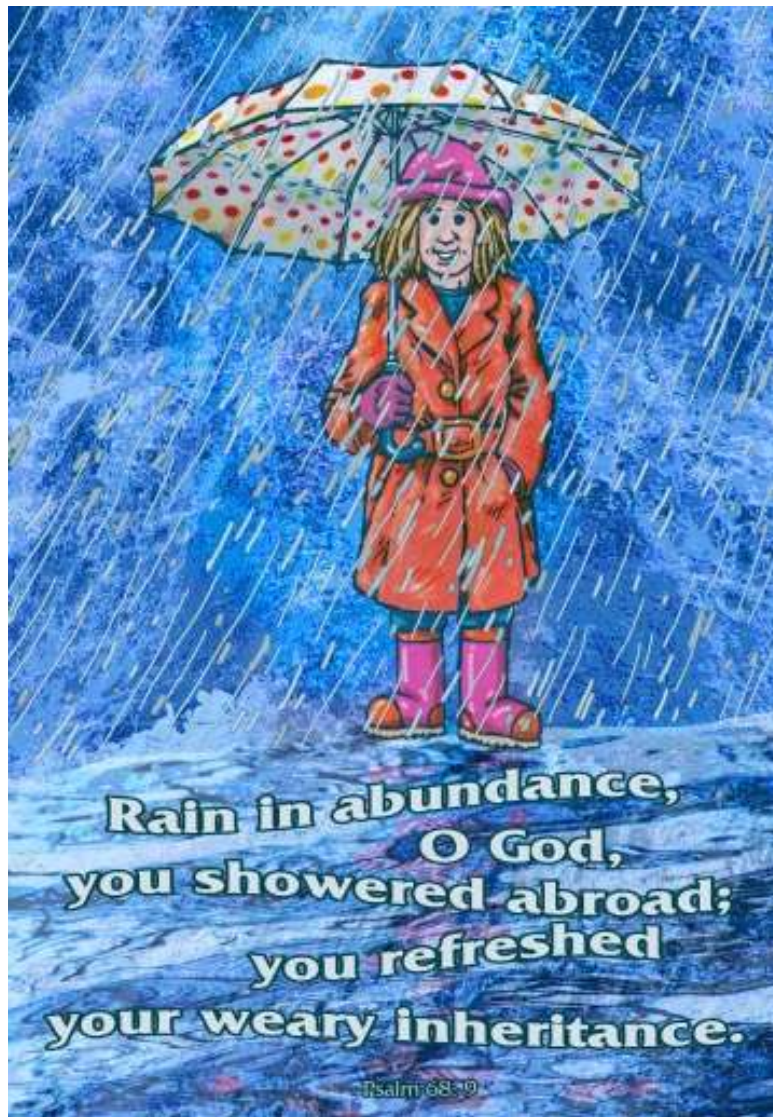


# Keep in touch with St Alban's Church

**Revd. Marie Flint**

Parish Office: 0161 477 0456

(Mon & Fri 9.30-12.30)



## April 2024

## To Contact the Church.....

Parish Office: 0161 477 0456  
Email: [stalbanofferton@gmail.com](mailto:stalbanofferton@gmail.com)

Priest: Revd. Marie Flint  
0161 480 3773  
[revmarieflint@gmail.com](mailto:revmarieflint@gmail.com)

Churchwardens	Eileen Comerford	0161 480 4235
	David Griffiths	07505122531
Treasurer	David Haslam	
Secretary	Janet Renshaw	
Reader	Brenda Baxendale	
Safeguarding	Jen Sadler	
	<a href="mailto:safeguard@stalbans@gmail.com">safeguard@stalbans@gmail.com</a>	

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

[www.stalbanofferton.org.uk](http://www.stalbanofferton.org.uk)



**St. Alban's Church Offerton**

Also on Instagram, X and [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com)

## Marie writes –

At a time when the church feels a little divided over issues of gender, relationships and marriage and when there's a lot of talk on the news about antisemitism, it was a joy to spend time during our lent course with our Methodist and Catholic sisters and brothers in Offerton. Those who came really appreciated learning alongside and from one another and we look forward to doing similar again in the future – perhaps during Advent. It was a true blessing and a reminder that we are all followers of Christ, even though we might express our faith in different ways.



On 9th April the church commemorates Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was martyred at Flossenburg concentration camp on 9th April 1945. When I was in Hamburg in October last year, I was pleased to have found a monument to the German theologian (pictured) outside St. Peter's Church. He was important for his support of ecumenism and his view of Christianity's role in a secular world. Bonhoeffer thought that the way to know God was to know Jesus and he had a strong social ethic.

From the first days of the Nazi accession to power in 1933, Bonhoeffer was involved in protests against the regime, especially its anti-Semitism, and despite another 18-month absence, during which he served as pastor of two small German congregations in London (1933–35), Bonhoeffer became a leading spokesman for the Confessing Church, the centre of German Protestant resistance to the Nazi regime.

Nazi ideology defined Jews by blood, based on the religion of an individual's grandparents, and Bonhoeffer was fierce in his defence of a non-racial definition of Jews, first protesting for the rights of practicing Christians of Jewish ancestry. His insistence that Jews who had converted to Christianity were entitled to the same rights in the church as other Christians put him at odds with many other Christian leaders.

His involvement in a plot to overthrow Adolf Hitler led to his imprisonment and execution. His letters and papers from prison, published posthumously in 1951, is perhaps the most profound document of his convictions. I think Bonhoeffer would have enjoyed our ecumenical bible study together. If you get the chance to read any of his work, please do because Bonhoeffer reminds us that as we seek to be more Christlike and to live in communion with all people, we are united by Christ, and no-one is more deserving of God's grace than any another.

In his own words, from *The Cost of Discipleship* "By judging others we blind ourselves to our own evil and to the grace which others are just as entitled to as we are."



*Rev'd Marie*

## 23<sup>rd</sup> April – St. George, Hiccup and the Dragon



Have you seen the film *How to Train your Dragon*? It's set in a Viking village under attack from dragons, who steal livestock and burn down houses. Hiccup, the village Chief's son, invents a machine to capture dragons. However, when he catches one of the most dangerous dragons, he cannot kill it, when he sees that the dragon is just as frightened as he is. Through this friendship, the people and dragons eventually learn to live in harmony.

This month we celebrate St George, the patron saint of England. He is famous for slaying a dragon, a tradition which became popular in the Middle Ages. Whether he killed an actual dragon is open to question! However, we do know that the original George was a Roman soldier at the time of Emperor Diocletian. He refused to renounce his faith, as commanded by the emperor, resulting in his death on 23 April 303 AD.

The contrast is clear: St George slayed the evil dragon, while Hiccup refused to kill one. However, they also have something important in common. Both acted according to their conscience, defying the popular understanding of those around them and not worrying about the personal cost to themselves. St George was martyred for standing up for his faith in Jesus before a pagan emperor, while Hiccup risked rejection by his father and village because of his compassion.

Today, we are still called to stand for Christ against wrongs and injustice in daily life, whatever the personal cost. However, we also need to be ready to look our enemies in the eye and meet their hostility with love and compassion. This is why we also remember this month that Jesus died and rose again, so that we might have God's power to do this in our lives.





## Don't hesitate to use hearing aids

Here is something you didn't expect: using hearing aids if you are a bit deaf can be of great benefit to your overall health.

Crystal Rolfe, director of health at the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) said: "Hearing aids bring enormous benefits for people with hearing loss. Research shows that wearing hearing aids may reduce the risk of cognitive decline, and it is well known that they have positive effects on physical, social, emotional, and mental wellbeing.



According to hearing loss charity RNID, 12 million adults in the UK are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus and an estimated seven million people could benefit from hearing aids, but only about two million use them.

The researchers hope the findings, published in The Lancet Healthy Longevity journal, will encourage more people to wear hearing aids. As one doctor said: "If you have hearing loss, get hearing aids. The benefits could be limitless."



This is the sign for a Hearing Loop System, we have one in Church.

A hearing loop helps people with hearing loss to hear conversations more easily. It works when a person's hearing aids, cochlear implant or loop listener is switched to the hearing loop setting. Sound is transmitted wirelessly directly to the hearing device. This reduces the distracting background noises.

You can find more information about hearing loss on the Royal National Institute for Deaf People pages

[www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

**RN  
I:D**

## St Alban's going for Bronze in 2024

### Hedge-hoggy facts

Hedgehogs live for around two-five years in the wild, though some have lived up to ten!

Adult hedgehogs have up to 7,000 spines and a small, hidden tail.

Hedgehog spines are actually modified hairs made from keratin, the same stuff as your nails!

Hedgehogs hibernate between November and March but may wake up occasionally to eat, go to the toilet or change nest sites.

Hedgehog poo is dark and up to 5cm long. If they've been eating lots of beetles it will be full of shimmering beetle wingcases.



Gardens are crucial for hedgehogs, they link up habitats and feeding grounds with extra green space where they hedgehog can safely hunt, hibernate, and nest.

Sadly, many UKs gardens are turning into poorer homes for wildlife. Paving, decking and the removal of grass, trees and plants mean hogs can no longer live their normal garden lifestyle.

### Let's help our Hedgehogs

By making some really simple changes, we can help make our gardens as hedgehog friendly as possible.

### Go chemical-free

Hedgehogs are natural pest controllers and eat a lot of the critters you might want to see less of in your garden. Ditching slug pellets means more slugs, which means more hedgehog food!

Do not use weedkiller, using it on your lawn means less earthworms, one of a hedgehog's favourite delicacies, birds love worms too, and worms eat and recycle organic matter to keep our soil healthy.

The hedgehog's favourite food are beetles, but they also like caterpillars. Moth caterpillars are especially easy to access as many species burrow down in the ground to pupate, making easy pickings for hungry hedgies. We can encourage moths to lay eggs in our gardens by planting a mix of native plants such as honeysuckle, dog rose, hawthorn and blackthorn, which the caterpillars feed on. Don't worry the hedgehog won't eat all of them so you'll soon have lovely moths to look at as well.



**Bonfires.** A hedgehog nightmare. Guy Fawkes Night falls right at the start of hedgehog hibernation season, when many are tucked up in the wood-piles we're planning on setting alight. If you want a bonfire at any time of year, build it immediately before burning it, but always check it before lighting, regardless of when it was built.



Leaving a **wild corner** in your garden that is a little rougher around the edges benefit all kinds of wildlife, especially invertebrates. It's also fantastic for hedgehogs who feast on things that creep and crawl. Why not let a corner of your garden go mad with native plants and grasses like meadow foxtail, knapweed, and ox-eye daisy? Pollinating insects will also benefit, so what's not to love? As well as acting like a hedgehog buffet, tussocky patches make perfect daytime nesting areas for hogs.

**Feeding our spikey friends** - Hedgehogs sometimes need a helping hand and will always appreciate a back-up food supply, especially as you never really know what the weather is going to do these days!

Very dry periods can make natural foods like earthworms much harder to get hold of, while mild winters could wake hogs up from hibernation only for them to find there are few insects about. The best supplementary foods to leave out in your garden are specially formulated hedgehog food, or meat-based cat or kitten food (no fish flavours).

Do not feed Hedgehogs with bread or milk as this can make them poorly. Fresh water is the only thing you should give hedgehogs to drink.

**Be careful when you are gardening** – this time of year we tidy up our gardens and clear away unwanted greenery. **BEFORE YOU DO** Check for hoggy visitors.....Long grass, wood-piles and leaf-mounds are irresistible for tired hogs and mums-to-be, so always make sure you check them for hedgies before doing work in the garden. Mowers and strimmers are one of the main causes of hedgehog injuries, causing horrific, often fatal damage, so carefully search your garden for spikey visitors before seeing to your garden.



If you have a **pond**, make it hedgehog safe. Hogs need to stay hydrated, and love refreshing ponds. Although hedgehogs are great swimmers, if they fall into a pond with steep sides they can't climb out again and will drown. Simple solution is to use a pile of stones, a piece of wood or some chicken wire to create a ramp. If you don't have a pond you can leave your local hogs some water in a shallow bowl.

**Hedgehog Home** a log pile offers a sheltered spot for local hogs to sleep and start a family, but also serves as a hedgehog buffet, as insects to take shelter inside. The fallen leaves in your garden make great hoggy nesting material!



**Make a hedgehog hole** Hedgehogs can roam an average distance of 2km in a single night to feed? Male hedgehogs can even cover up to 3km a night in search of females during breeding season! They can't take these midnight strolls if their route is blocked by impenetrable walls and fences that

constrict their habitat. So give them a helping hand by creating a hedgehog hole? It only needs to be around 13cm x 13cm (the size of a CD). If you aren't able to do this you could make a small tunnel underneath, but either way, check with your adjoining neighbour before making any holes.



**Send us some photos of your Hedgehog friendly spaces and we'll add them to our May Newsletter.**





# APRIL 2024

## DO YOU NOTICE RUBBISH?

Help keep your local area safe and clean for people and wildlife. Look on the ground, in hedges or on verges. There is so much rubbish.

In March the Keep Britain Tidy asked us to collect litter – between 15<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> March – we were asked to pick up litter where we live – and to pledge how many black bin bags you would collect.

My street is a small one, only 12 houses. I already go out 3 times a week and collect the litter left by people passing by. So, I pledged I could collect 1 bin bag of litter. I actually collected 1.5 bin bags over the 17 days. So much litter from cans, sweet/chocolate wrappers to full bags of McDonalds waste. It's a disgrace.

Well, its April now and I don't see why we all can't keep picking up litter and making where we are a nicer place to live – if we keep picking up the litter maybe the litter droppers might notice how nice everywhere is and stop being litter louts – we can live in hope.

If you see it, pick it up, bag it, recycle it or put it in the bin. Always wear gloves or use a litter picker.

**Litter-picking is a simple action that makes an immediate and visible difference.**



## Join in a local clean-up event

You could join in a local clean-up event, it's a hands-on way to combat litter and promote community engagement. It's about taking responsibility for our shared spaces and enjoying a cleaner, greener neighbourhood.

Plus, it's a fantastic way to meet like-minded individuals who share your passion for the environment. Together, you can make a tangible difference in your local area.

## Recycling

Recycling paper, plastic, and glass is your way of giving materials a second chance while reducing the strain on our landfills. Did you know that recycling a single aluminium can save enough energy to run a TV for 3 hours? Every ton of paper recycled saves 17 trees.

## Reusable bags, bottles, and containers.

Switching to reusables reduces your waste. If YOU switch to a reusable bottle, YOU could save about 156 plastic bottles from trashing the environment each year. Now think of how many bottles that is times the number of people on our planet. That's a lot, isn't it?

**Start going green with small, conscious choices every day. Each step, no matter how small, contributes to a larger collective effort to preserve our planet, each action creates a ripple of positive change.**

**It's OUR invitation to tread lightly on Earth.**



## **Christian books to borrow**

There is a small collection of Christian books at the back of church for anyone to borrow and return once read.

Please help yourself – and any short reviews of the books for the magazine would be gratefully received.

Please email your reviews to Jane at [stalbanofferton@gmail.com](mailto:stalbanofferton@gmail.com)

## **More than £250.000 distributed in conservation grants**



More than £250,000 was distributed by the Church of England last year to support conservation projects in parishes, including work to preserve wall paintings, baptismal fonts, stained glass windows and rood screens.

A total of £255,585 has been awarded for 123 projects in 34 dioceses – with the number of grants up 20% on the year before – to help churches maintain and preserve significant cultural and historical items, including paintings, doors, chairs, clocks, and organs.

The grants, from donated funds, including major funder, the Pilgrim Trust, were distributed by the Church of England's national Cathedrals and Church Buildings team.

## **Wages**

Seen on a church notice board: 'Despite inflation, the wages of sin remain the same.'



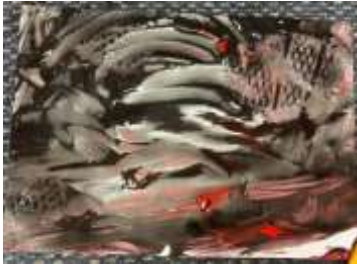
## Messy Church - March



In March our activities included clothes pin tombs, a beautiful butterfly snack, paint craft, shrink plastic key ring, Easter cards, an edible Easter Garden, planting sun flower seeds, handprint bunnies and Jesus resurrection.







### 3<sup>rd</sup> April – Richard of Chichester

**More clearly, dearly, and nearly**



Ever wonder where the prayer ... *'May I know thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, and follow thee more nearly, day by day'* comes from? Richard of Chichester, a bishop in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, wrote it.

He began life as Richard de Wych of Droitwich, the son of a yeoman farmer. But Richard was a studious boy, and after helping his father on the farm for several years, refused an advantageous offer of marriage, and instead made his way to Oxford, and later to Paris and Bologna to study canon law.

In 1235 he returned to Oxford, and was soon appointed Chancellor, where he supported Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his struggles against King Henry III's misuse of Church funds. After further study to become a priest, Richard was in due course made a bishop himself. He was greatly loved. He was charitable and accessible, both stern and merciful to sinners

extraordinarily generous to those stricken by famine, and a brilliant legislator of his diocese. He decreed that the sacraments were to be administered without payment, Mass celebrated in dignified conditions, the clergy to be chaste, to practise residence, and to wear clerical dress. The laity was obliged to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days, and to know by heart the Hail Mary as well as the Lord's Prayer and the Creed.

Richard was also prominent in preaching the Crusade, which he saw as a call to reopen the Holy Land to pilgrims, not as a political expedition. He died at Dover on 3 April 1253. In art, Richard of Chichester is represented with a chalice at his feet, in memory of his having once dropped the chalice at Mass! One ancient English church is dedicated to him.

And, of course, he is author of that famous prayer, now set to popular music, which runs in full: *"Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ for all the benefits thou hast given me, for all the pains and insults which thou hast borne for me. O most merciful redeemer, friend, and brother, may I know thee more clearly, love thee more dearly and follow thee more nearly, day by day."*



## Seen in a West Country Church



Whenever I see a little church,  
I always pay a visit.  
So when at last I'm carried in,  
the Lord won't ask 'Who is it?'

## **Do you remember your own pin number?**



Nearly one in five of us can't. We are so used to paying by contactless that when we have to withdraw cash or type our PIN into a card reader, our minds go blank.

'Contactless' payments hit a record high last year. A staggering 93.4 per cent of all in-store card transactions up to £100 was made using contactless, rather than cash or PIN and card reader.

According to Barclays, we now depend on contactless payments and smartphone technology so much that more than a fifth of young people now leave their wallets at home when they go shopping.

Contactless technology was first introduced by Barclaycard 17 years ago. It had a spending limit of £10. The limit was increased during the pandemic, to reduce physical contact in shops, rising to its current £100 limit.



## Cat's eyes

When you drive on a road late at night  
And the dark is affecting your sight;  
At that time of day  
It's easy to stray  
Too far with your car to the right!

But we've been protected from tears  
For most of the past ninety years,  
Since a man who was wise  
Invented cat's eyes  
So the edge of your lane now appears!

Now drivers, protected from frights  
By mirrors reflecting our lights,  
May shout 'hip-hooray!'  
At all times of day,  
And drive with no fear of the nights!

*Nigel Beeton writes: 90 years ago, on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1934, a very clever man named Percy Shaw patented a device that he'd invented called a 'cat's eye' – a pair of reflectors mounted on a well between the white lines in the centre of a road or between lanes on a dual carriageway - which were few and far between in 1934!*

## Worry



I have so many problems that if a new one comes along today, it will be at least two weeks before I can worry about it.

## School Children 'Experience Easter' at St. Alban's

"After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe."" (Acts 15:7).

The Easter story is a wonderful, amazing and brilliant story and is at the heart of our Christian Faith. During one week in March we had the opportunity to tell the Easter story to some of our local school children when we invited schools to visit St. Alban's for an 'Easter Experience'. We were blessed with the company of children, staff and some parents from the Fairway School and Banks Lane Infants school and we spent a wonderful week sharing the Gospel message with them.

Each group of children came for an hour-long visit, which took them around Church on an Easter journey, stopping off at various interactive story stations which told a different part of the events of Holy Week and Easter.

They started with the story of Palm Sunday, where Jesus enters Jerusalem and where we invited them to consider the hopes and dreams of the crowds of people who eagerly greeted Him. The children were asked to think about their hopes and dreams and came up with some excellent answers – mostly about hoping for lots of chocolate eggs at Easter.



The story moved on to think about the Last Supper, where the children explored the idea of servant-hood and had a think about what it might look like for us to serve others. The children then sat around a table whilst learning about how Jesus asked the disciples to remember him with bread and wine.

The children then moved to the Garden of Gethsemane, where they were reminded that they are never alone, before moving to the Cross, where the theme was 'Jesus sharing our sorrows'. The final story station was a visit to the tomb where we talked about the resurrection and why Christians celebrate Easter. Each child was given a chocolate egg on their way out.



The Easter Experience was supported by a good number of volunteers. A big THANK YOU to everyone who came and helped. In all, 240 children came to Experience Easter. What a blessing and such fun to be able to tell the Gospel to so many children and teachers!

*Rev'd Marie*



## Heaven

Seen in a parish magazine:

“We shall be meeting on Wednesday, when the subject will be ‘Heaven – how do we get there?’

Transport by bus is available at 6.45pm opposite the King’s Arms.





## **Cathedral attendance has continued its post-pandemic bounce back**



Attendance at Church of England cathedrals has continued to bounce back following the pandemic, according to the latest statistics.

Figures show that adult usual Sunday attendance rose 60% between 2021 and 2022 for the 42 Church of England mainland Cathedrals to 12,300 adults. A total of 28,200 people including children attended services every week, according to [Cathedral Statistics 2022](#).

Over the year there were 584,000 attendances at specially arranged services – not included in average weekly attendance – such as school services. The number of special services stood at 2,100. The total reported attendance at Christmas services stood at 104,000.

## **Welcome**



We welcome into our church family -  
Claire Sherry who was baptised on 10<sup>th</sup> March  
2024 and  
George, Marion, Lou and Danny who were  
baptised on 31<sup>st</sup> March 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](http://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 (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday only)

10.30am         Holy Communion

### Tuesday

10.30am         Praise & Play

### Wednesday

10.30am         Holy Communion – St John's

### Friday

10.00am         Coffee morning

### Saturday

3.30pm-5.30pm   Messy Church (1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of month)