

# Keep in touch with St Alban's Church

**Revd. Marie Flint**

**Parish Office: 0161 477 0456**

**(Mon & Fri 9.30-12.30)**



**December 2024/January 2025**

## To Contact the Church.....

Parish Office: 0161 477 0456  
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Reader	Brenda Baxendale	
Safeguarding	Jen Sadler	

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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)

find us on Facebook/Instagram and X and  
[www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com)



★ CHRISTMAS SERVICES  
AT ST. ALBAN'S CHURCH, OFFERTON

- ★
- Sat 30th Nov - 11am-2pm - Christmas Fair
- Sat 7th Dec - 3.30pm - Christmas Messy Church
- Sun 8th Dec - 6pm - Albany Carol Service
- Sat 14th Dec - 1pm - Community Carol singing at ALDI Lisburne Lane
- Sun 15th Dec - 4pm - Carol and Nativity Service (with an invitation to come dressed as a nativity character)
- Thur 19th Dec- 7pm - Blue Christmas (remembering loved ones no longer with us at Christmas)
- Tue 24th Dec - 4pm - Christingle Service
- Tue 24th Dec- 11.30pm - Midnight communion ★
- Mon 25th Dec - 9am - Said Holy Communion at St Alban's

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

## Marie writes-

As we enter the season of Advent – a time of preparation and waiting for the celebration of Christmas, I am often drawn to thinking about Mary. I wonder what it was actually like for Mary as she prepared to bring a special baby into the world. I think the reality of Mary's experience was probably not as rosy as nativity Christmas card pictures depict. She was only a young lady when she had



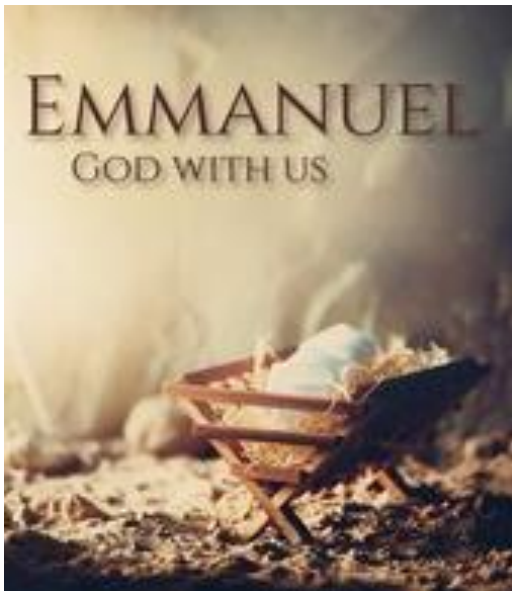
the shock of the visit from an angel with news from God. As news goes, being told that you're going to have a virgin birth and the child you will bear will be the Son of God is pretty big news! Most teenagers, including me at that age, would have run a mile. But not Mary! "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word", Mary says to the angel Gabriel. How extraordinary! What faith and obedience Mary had. I wonder if she really understood the task ahead. Did she really know the reality of what was about to happen?

The reality of Jesus' birth is not really the sanitised version of the story that the Gospel writers write about. The Holy family were away from their home. They had travelled for days on foot and would have been exhausted. There must've been a level of anxiety that comes with the weight of responsibility of carrying and delivering the holy child. There

were no medical interventions – no pain relief, no clean sheets or towels. It was cold and dark. The gospels don't tell us how long Mary laboured for – or who cleaned up the mess after the birth. There's no mention of how sore she was afterwards, of cracked nipples or any of the other realities of giving birth to a child. And we sing at Christmas time about the little Lord Jesus – no crying he makes. But all baby's cry! Mostly in the middle of the night, so there would have been very little chance for Mary and Joseph to lay down their sweet heads! The reality of the birth of the Christ-child is that it was a messy affair. And that messiness, confusion, anxiety and pain is a reflection of our world and of our lives.

One of the names for Jesus, which we use quite often especially at Christmas time is Emmanuel. The name Emmanuel is a masculine name of Hebrew origin that means "God is with us". Emmanuel is definitely worth celebrating at Christmas time and throughout the year, because at the heart of the nativity is the message that God is





with us in the middle of the messiness, noise and pain of our lives. So, however you spend your Christmas know that God is with you; and that through the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God knows what it is to be human.

There is plenty of opportunity to come along to a service or activity at St. Alban's during Advent and Christmas.

We will be joining our Christian sisters and brothers from Dialstone Lane Methodist Church, GLO church and St. Philip's and St. Peter's on Monday evenings during advent from 7.30pm in the Strawberry Gardens pub. We'll be looking at

Paula Gooder's book 'Women of the Nativity'. All are welcome – do join us if you are able to.

Christmas Messy Church, for families of all ages is on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December at 3.30pm and the Albany Carol service is Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 6pm. On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December we'll be singing carols at Offerton ALDI and at Lisburne Court. Our carol service is on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December at 4pm where you are invited to come along dressed as a character from the nativity story. For those of us who find Christmas a difficult time because we miss a loved one, we have our lovely Blue Christmas service on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm. Our friends



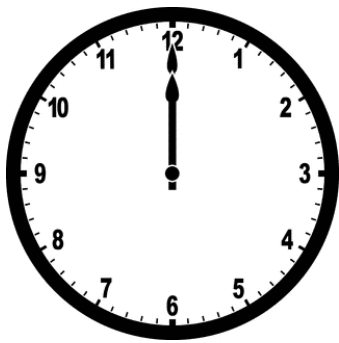
from Memories Funeral service will kindly provide the refreshments. Our ever-popular Christingle service is on Christmas Eve at 4pm, followed by Midnight communion at 11.30pm and on Christmas Day there will be a short service of holy communion at 9am. Please do join us for all, or some of these services and remember to invite your family, friends and neighbours. We will be delighted to welcome you!

Wishing you a blessed Advent, Christmas and New Year

*Rev'd Marie*

## Why does Christmas begin at Midnight?

The hour was first chosen at Rome in the fifth century to symbolise the idea that Christ was born at midnight – a mystical idea in no way hindered by historical evidence! No one knows the hour of His birth.



Certainly, in recent times, Holy Communion at midnight on Christmas morning has proved popular with modern families. One British writer pointed out its “domestic convenience” in 1947: “for where there are children and no servants, husband and wife may be unable to communicate at any other time.” (So things don’t change, then!)

## Our Parish Christmas Card

If you would like to be included in this year’s Christmas card, please submit all names that you would like putting on the card along with your donation, to Eileen by 15<sup>th</sup> December for distribution on 22<sup>nd</sup> December. This year all donations will go towards the charity FRESH – Food, Ready, Every, School, Holiday.



**WE DID IT WE GAINED OUR  
BRONZE AWARD IN 2024**



**Let's go for silver in 2025**

# December 2024 – January 2025

## Newsletter

Here are some of the cuter creatures considered to be the UK's most endangered animals ----- **Countryfile 2024**



The **Scottish wildcat** is the only feline species native to the British Isles, the wildcat was once widespread, but is now restricted to northern Scotland where as few as 100 may remain

The **Red squirrel** has been in decline since the early 20th century and has dwindled to an estimated population of only 140,000. Only commonly found in the far north of England and Scotland.



The **Hazel Dormouse** has a great fondness for sleep, the hazel dormouse spends half of the year in hibernation. They are small, the body measuring 75mm with a 65mm tail, and have golden-brown fur with large, round black eyes.

Once a familiar summer sound, the ‘purr’ of the **Turtle Dove** is now rarely heard in Britain. In fact, in 2022 a survey suggested they were the fastest declining species in the UK. They have declined by 99% in Britain since 1960, due in part to widespread hunting across the Mediterranean as they migrate from Africa.



Let's hope their numbers increase and they are no longer endangered.



Christmas is a time that we think of our loved ones, those who are here with us on Earth and those who are no longer with us.

I found this poem on the internet by **Wanda Bencke** – I hope it brings comfort to you.

[I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year](#)

I see the countless Christmas trees. Around the world below,  
With tiny lights, like heaven's stars, reflecting on the snow.  
The sight is so spectacular, please wipe away that tear.  
For I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I hear the many Christmas songs. That people hold so dear,  
But the sounds of music can't compare, with the Christmas choir up here.  
For I have no words to tell you, the joy their voices bring.  
For it is beyond description, to hear an angel sing.

I can't tell you of the splendour, or the peace here in this place.  
Can you just imagine Christmas, with our Savior, face to face?  
I'll ask Him to light your spirit, as I tell Him of your love;  
So then pray for one another, as you lift your eyes above.

Please let your heart be joyful, and let your spirit sing.  
For I'm spending Christmas in Heaven, and I'm walking with the King!

I know how much you miss me; I see the pain inside your heart.  
But I'm not so far away, we really aren't apart.  
So be happy for me, dear ones, you know I hold you dear,  
And be glad I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I send you each a special gift, from my heavenly home above.  
I send you each a memory of my undying love.  
After all "love" is the gift, more precious than pure gold.  
It was always most important in the stories Jesus told.

Please love and keep each other, as my Father said to do,  
For I can't count the blessings, or the love He has for you.  
So have a Merry Christmas and wipe away that tear.  
Remember that I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year!

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**  
**- try to be Eco Friendly this festive season**



# December 2024 – January 2025

Rather than a Christmas present this year why not ask for the money to be donated to a charity – here's some ideas.....

## SOME LOCAL CHARITIES



**Stockport & District Mind** - are an independent mental health charity offering friendly, accessible support & information to promote mental health & wellbeing in Stockport and adjacent areas. [www.stockportmind.org.uk](http://www.stockportmind.org.uk)



**Stockport Foodbank** operates from 8 centres across the town at partner Church locations, cafes and Community Centres and are able to provide access to emergency food parcels 6 days a week. [www.stockport.foodbank.org.uk](http://www.stockport.foodbank.org.uk)



**St Ann's Hospice** aim to meet the unique physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of those with a life-limiting illness, and to help maintain their dignity. They provide specialist palliative care for people with cancer and non-cancer life-limiting illnesses, at all stages of their illness. [www.sah.org.uk](http://www.sah.org.uk)



**The Wellspring** supports the people of Stockport that are homeless or at risk of losing their home. They provide the resources, understanding, and care that people need inside the community. They respond to a combination of issues surrounding housing, physical & mental health, domestic violence, substance misuse, debt, unemployment, illiteracy, and social exclusion. [www.thewellspring.co.uk](http://www.thewellspring.co.uk)



**Walthew House** provides practical and emotional support for people with sight or hearing loss. They support over 400 local people each week through a range of service for both adults and young people. [www.walthewhouse.org.uk](http://www.walthewhouse.org.uk)



**Manchester & Cheshire Dogs Home** – Finding forever homes, continuing to care and rehome unloved and unwanted dogs. [www.dogshome.net](http://www.dogshome.net)



It is our mission to care for and rehome the cats and kittens that we take in, helping them find their forever homes. [www.heatonscats.org.uk](http://www.heatonscats.org.uk)

## SOME UK CHARITIES



**Cancer Research** - Working towards a world where everybody lives longer, better lives, free from the fear of cancer.

[www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)



**Macmillan** – their website says, ‘Because cancer can affect your life in so many ways, we do whatever it takes to give people the support they need’, including Macmillan nursing care.

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

**NSPCC** – ‘Every childhood is worth fighting for’ [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**RSPCA**—exists to inspire everyone to create a better world for every animal. They change lives, laws, industries and minds so that all animals can live a better life. [www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)



**National Autistic Society**

- help the 700,000 autistic people in the UK and their families, running specialist schools, campaigning for improved rights or training companies on being more autism-friendly, they are

dedicated to transforming lives and changing attitudes. [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)



**DementiaUK**

**Dementia UK** - are the specialist dementia nursing charity that is here for the whole family. They provide free, life-changing support and advice to anyone affected by dementia.

[www.dementiauk.org](http://www.dementiauk.org)



Parkinson's is a progressive neurological condition. This means that it causes problems in the brain and gets worse over time. Changing attitudes and finding a cure. [www.parkinsons.org.uk](http://www.parkinsons.org.uk)



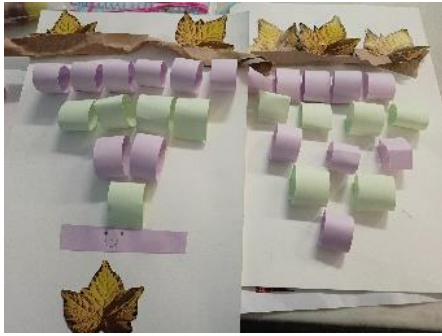
**British Heart Foundation**

BHF is the biggest funder of research into heart and circulatory diseases in Europe. We help find cures and treatments to give people more time with loved ones. [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

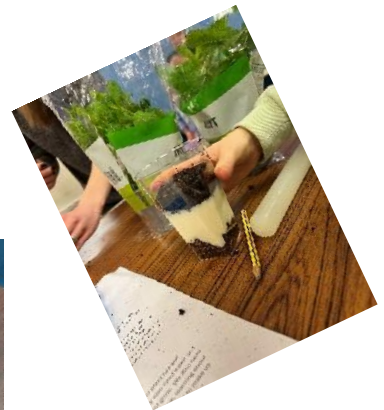
These are just a few ideas - not an exhaustive list.

Search online there are hundreds of charities for you to choose from.

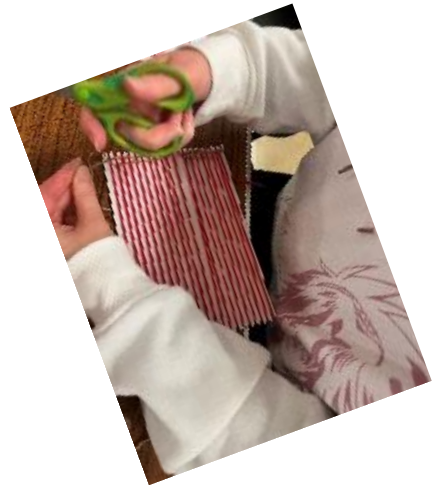
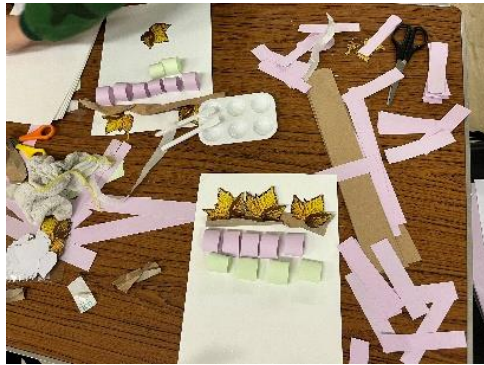
## Messy Church- November



Our November theme was 'Who is Jesus' the activities included gracious grapes, treading grapes, woven together, fruit smoothie, matching pairs, foil hedgehog, butterfly clothes pegs and edible plants.







17th December –

**Eglantyne Jebb founder of Save the Children**



Here is a modern-day saint whose compassion and determination has saved literally millions of lives.

Eglantyne Jebb did not begin as an obvious ‘mover and shaker’ of people. Born in Shropshire in 1876, she grew up in Ellesmere, studied history at Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford, taught at Marlborough, and then resigned as she was not physically robust.

Eglantyne moved to live with her mother in Cambridge, and it would have been so easy to settle for a life of peaceful obscurity. But she was a Christian, and at Oxford she had developed a passion for social concerns, so this compassion now drove her to take action.

She began in 1906 by publishing research on the poverty she’d found in Cambridge. Then in 1912 the Balkan Wars broke out, and Eglantyne left Cambridge for Macedonia. Her months among the refugees led her to decide that long-term constructive aid was more effective than short-term handouts. The First World War left Eglantyne horrified by the prolonged Allied blockade on Germany and Austria-Hungary, which even after Armistice meant starvation for millions of civilians, especially children.

And so, in 1919 Eglantyne and her sister Dorothy Buxton helped found the ‘Fight the Famine’ Council, which wanted to end the blockade and establish a League of Nations. One day during a rally in Trafalgar Square, Eglantyne was arrested for distributing a leaflet showing starving children which read: “Our blockade has caused this – millions of children are starving to death.”

She ended up in court and was fined, but the judge was so impressed with Eglantyne's commitment to children that he himself paid her fine. His money became the first donation to Save the Children, the new charity just set up by Eglantyne and Dorothy.

Save the Children was officially launched at the Albert Hall in May 1919, with the aim of helping the starving civilians of central Europe. It was a success, raising £400,000 in that first year alone. When in the autumn of 1921 Russia was facing famine, Save the Children chartered a cargo ship, the SS Torcello, to carry 600 tons of lifesaving food and medical supplies to Russia – saving hundreds of thousands of lives.

By 1922 Save the Children had become one of Britain's biggest charities. Eglantyne Jebb's Declaration of the Rights of the Child, written in 1923, was adopted by the League of Nations the following year. The present-day UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is derived from it.

But ten years of running Save the Children had sapped Eglantyne's fragile strength, and she died in Geneva in 1928, aged only 52.



**Save the  
Children**

**What would you like for Christmas?**

A little girl visited Father Christmas in the local garden centre grotto. He welcomed her with a smile and asked what she would like for Christmas. She gasped and stared at him in horror. "Didn't you get my email?!"

**12<sup>th</sup> January**

### **St Antony Pucci**



If you have nothing much going for you, Antony Pucci (1819-92) should be your patron saint. He came from nowhere – a peasant family in Tuscany. He went nowhere – he spent his life as a parish priest in the Tuscan city of Viareggio. He was unattractive to look at. He wasn't good with words – people found him awkward and shy.

So why do people still remember him today? Because Antony Pucci used the one gift he did have in the service of others. He was an excellent organiser, and he served his people brilliantly. His care for the sick in the epidemics of 1854 and 1866 was outstanding. He even set up the first seaside nursing homes for poorly children.

Antony Pucci used to say that organisation is the servant of charity, not its substitute. But he used his gift for organisation as a way of showing his charity, and for that he was loved.

So – if your family is nothing to shout about, if you wince when you look in the mirror in the morning, if you stand tongue-tied in most social situations, don't despair. Ask God to show you what gift He HAS given you and use it in the service of others. And in giving to them, you will receive! It is when we lose our lives for His sake, in His service, that we truly find them.



## Cycle of Prayer

**December** we pray for the staff and pupils at Castle Hill and we pray that our parish and the church of England is moved to climate action to meet our net zero target by 2030.

**January** we pray for the staff and pupils at Banks Lane Juniors and we pray for countries like Australia affected by wildfires and loss of biodiversity.



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](mailto: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](mailto:stalbanofferton@gmail.com) with your reviews. Happy reading!

## Parish Pray Day



On 9<sup>th</sup> November members of the parish gathered into the Parish Hall for a Parish Pray Day to spend some time in prayer, discussion and fellowship to discern where God is at work in our parish and how we might get more involved in what God is up to. We were

joined by Jon Pocock, Chester Diocese Strategic Programme Director, who gave us a little bit of background into the Diocese's strategy for blessing the lives of the 1.5 million people in the Diocese with the love of God. For us, this translates into 17.5 thousand people in Offerton who don't yet have Jesus in their lives. Jon was hugely insightful and very encouraging and we each discovered a little bit more



about ourselves, God and our community here in Offerton. We all came away with things we can pray about further as well as some ideas for the ways in which we might shine Christ's light into the lives of the people we meet; sharing hope, one life at a time. Thank you to Jon for sharing your experience and wisdom and time.

### Parish Prayer group

Did you know that we have a parish prayer group?

We are a small team of individuals committed to the daily prayer for people and situations in our parish. We confidentially share prayer requests and stories of prayers answered and would be happy to pray for you too. If you have any prayer requests please speak to a member of the prayer team – Rev'd Marie, Brenda, Judy, Janet or Eileen and we will gladly include you in our daily prayers. Or, you can email Rev'd Marie at [revmarieflint@gmail.com](mailto:revmarieflint@gmail.com). If you feel you'd like to join the team and are able to offer some time in prayer for other people, you would be very welcome to join us.



**The rainbows made poppies and bookmarks for Remembrance Day.**



**Beautiful artwork by the children at Olly Jolly's who meet at St John's church**



**At Praise and Play the children made paper plates crowns for Christ the King.**

**Tony couldn't resist making one for himself!**



**2024**

A message from the resource Editor - Anne Coomes and the Parish Pump Team

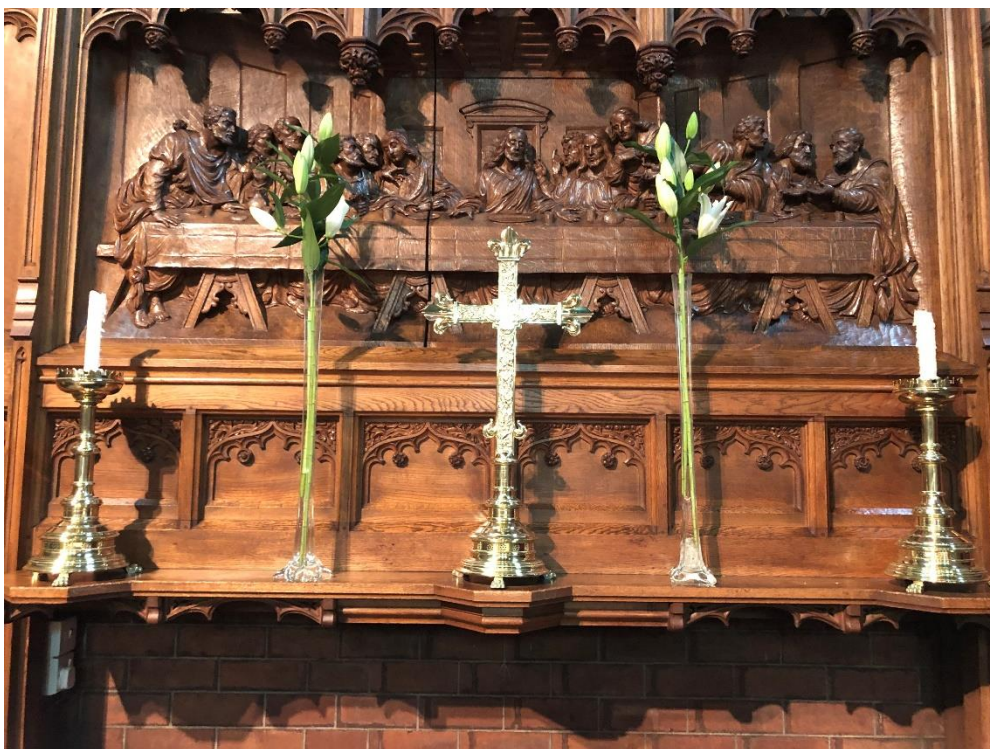
What a year it has been, with world events going from bad to worse. As well as the escalating war in Ukraine and the Middle East, we have had unprecedented wildfires, storms and floods across the world. Millions are displaced, millions are homeless and hungry. Meanwhile, the cost-of-living crisis continues, and food banks in the UK look set to be overwhelmed. Many of us now are facing a hard winter, with seemingly little to be cheerful about.

And yet, and yet – the message of Christmas is just as real for us today as it was 2000 years ago, and it can still bring us hope and joy for our long-term future. Emmanuel has come, the Prince of Peace, the Son of Righteousness. God IS with us. And HIS kingdom will have no end.

### **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 (children's club 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday)

#### **Tuesday**

10.30am Praise & Play (term time)

#### **Wednesday**

10.30am Holy Communion – St John's (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wed)

10.30am Healing Service- St Alban's (1<sup>st</sup> Wed of month)

1.00 – 3.00pm Bereavement Café (1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday only)

#### **Thursday**

6.30 – 8.30pm Youth Music Group (term time)

#### **Saturday**

10.00 – 12.00pm Gardening club (1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of month)

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