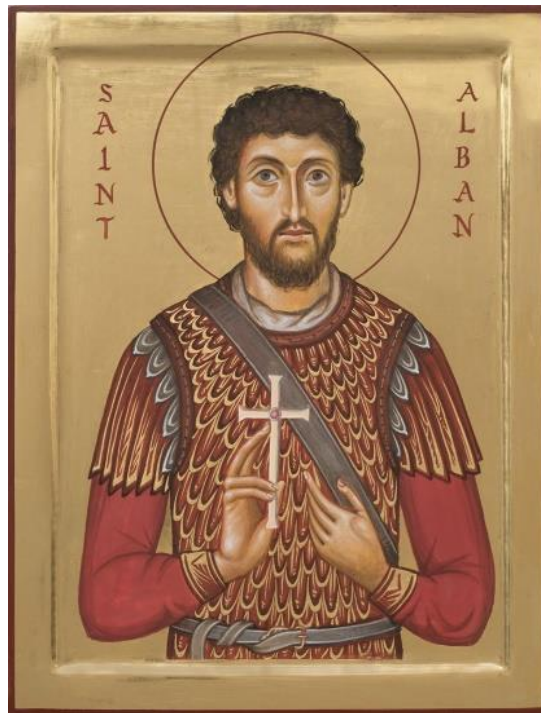


Keep in touch with St Alban's Church

Revd. Marie Flint

Parish Office: 0161 477 0456

(Mon & Fri 9.30-12.30)



22nd June – St. Alban's day

June 2024

To Contact the Church.....

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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@stalbands@gmail.com

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

www.achurchnearyou.com

On inclusion



A bible reading that particularly speaks to Paul Mittler, our inclusion officer, is 1Corinthians 12. In this passage St. Paul writes about spiritual gifts and how we are all blessed with different gifts that can be used to glorify God. Verses 4 to 11 reads:

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.”

The passage goes on to describe how each of us, with our particular gifts makes us the body of Christ, that is the church. Paul thinks this is a lovely passage and speaks to him, both as a disabled person and in his role as inclusion officer. We may not all be brilliant at all things, but we are blessed with different talents that we can bring to the table, and when we work together and use our individual gifts, the body works well and we give glory to God.

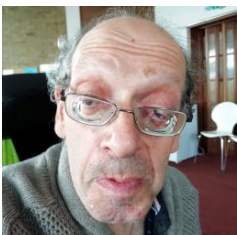
Paul certainly brings his unique talents and experiences to the table in his advocacy for inclusion, as he has a sincere passion that church should be a home for all people no matter what their sexual identity is, what colour skin they have, what age they are, what their ability or disability is, who they fall in love with or how rich or poor they might be. Paul would like to make sure that the people who attend our church are the same kinds of people who live in our community.

Paul has a unique experience of being a disabled Christian, particularly wrestling with some of Jesus’ physical healing stories in the gospels.

He writes:

“In the past disabled people have often been seen as valueless and worthless. In Christ’s time they were often beggars. As someone who was born with an impairment, my disability is very much part of me. I personally would not know what to do if I was miraculously healed. Even when I was a teenager attending a special boarding school, I could not understand the healing and Capernaum, described in Mark 2, when a paralysed man was lowered through the roof to be healed by Jesus. I thought “Why has Christ not healed me and my fellow disabled pupils of our impairments?”. In ancient times disabled people were looked upon as being evil in some way and were often separated from the rest of society. But, as disabled teenagers, what had we done to deserve our fate? Yet, although I cannot accept that physical healing solely was done by Christ, I can accept that it is imperative that Christ heals everyone in a spiritual way and emphasises the wholeness of the body. To me, this is far more important than physical healing”.

Having its roots in the 1969 Stonewall uprising in New York, June is Pride Month. It is a vibrant and inclusive celebration that honours the LGBTQ+ community, their history, achievements, and ongoing struggle for equality. This annual event serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of acceptance, diversity, and love; also Gospel values. It brings together individuals, organizations, and communities to advocate for LGBTQ+ rights and celebrate the progress made towards a more inclusive society. So, as we fly our rainbow flag this month, in support of Pride month, we thank and praise God that we are all fearfully and wonderfully made. We celebrate our differences and continue to work together to bring about the kind of inclusion that is fitting for God’s kingdom.



Special thanks to Paul for his contribution.

St Alban's going for Bronze in 2024



We hope you joined in

NO MOW MAY

If you can keep it going throughout June that would be great.

The birds, bees, insects, and small animals will thank you for their food and habitat. Please be careful when you do eventually mow that there are no small creatures living in your lawn.

Email us photos of your WILD lawn and we will post these in our next magazine.

Can you find any of these wildflowers in your garden, local park or whilst on holiday.



BUTTERCUP
found in
meadows & lawns



COWSLIP
found in
meadows, lanes
& grassy banks



RED CLOVER
found in
parks, lawns
& sea walls

In APRIL we featured Hedgehogs, in MAY we featured lawns this month we are looking at BEES.

Bees are so important to our world they pollinate the plants in our garden and the vegetables we eat. Broccoli, carrots, fennel, parsnips, turnips, kale, apples, raspberries, and tomatoes are among the British crops that rely on pollination by bees.

Bees prop up the ecosystem

Without bees (and thousands of other insect species that call the UK home), it wouldn't be long before our ecosystem collapsed. Bees pollinate our wild trees and wildflowers, which then support other insects, which then support birds, bats, mammals and everything up the food chain with food and shelter.

Red Mason Bee



3 types of Bee you will might in your garden

You might be surprised to learn there are more than 250 types of bee in the UK.

Bumblebees, mason bees, mining bees - these are just one small part of the big, beautiful bee family.

Red Mason Bees live a solitary life and are great pollinators. They nest in hollow spaces so we might find them in our bug hotel, they do not sting.

Honey Bee



Honey bees are social insects and live in large numbers, they are super-important pollinators for flowers, fruits and vegetables. They transfer pollen between the male and female parts, allowing plants to grow seeds and fruit. Honey bees live in hives or colonies and only sting when they feel threatened.

Bumble bee



There are 24 types of Bumble bee in the UK, they are very social insects and they mainly nest in the ground. Bumble bees do not make honey but are wonderful pollinators. The Bumble Bee is twice as big the Honey Bee.

You can make a big difference to bees and other wildlife by stopping using pesticides in your garden. Some pests provide food for crucial pollinators as well as birds and other animals, so leaving them to be controlled naturally is the best choice if you want to help save bees.

One of the easiest ways to help bees is by planting lots of nectar-rich, bee-friendly flowers. Dedicate an area of your garden if you have one – even a single window box or pot on a balcony can be a lifeline.

SAVE OUR BEES



JUNE 2024

REDUCE YOUR WASTE

We need to make wasting our resources unacceptable in all aspects of our life. Every product we buy has an environmental footprint and could end up in landfill. The impact of plastic pollution on our oceans is becoming increasingly clear, having drastic impacts on marine life.

Recycling what we can reduces the amount of new materials we are making, and upcycling is a creative way to make old items into something more valuable. This could be reusing a jam jar as a candle holder or using old tins as plant pots – the possibilities are endless!

It's not just the products we buy. It's estimated that a third of all food produced in the world is lost or wasted. Do your bit by eating up leftovers and use any ingredients you have spare to make interesting meals. Try to waste as little food as possible and compost the organic waste you can't eat.





St Alban's

St Alban's Cathedral has a shrine to St Alban, where pilgrims worship the first Christian. St Alban's is successor to the Roman town of Verulamium and contains the remains of a Roman arena it was nearly destroyed by Henry 5th. St Alban's is known for having 'Healing holes' where you can put a hand or limb in to be healed.

It is said that the Alban Bun, the precursor to the famous Hot Cross Bun, originates in St Albans where Brother Thomas Roccliffe, a 14th Century Monk at St Albans Abbey, developed an original recipe. From 1361, Brother Thomas would distribute these buns to feed the poor on Good Friday.

The original recipe remains a closely guarded secret, but ingredients include flour, eggs, fresh yeast, currants and grains of paradise or cardamom. The baker today stays faithful to the original 14th century recipe with only a slight addition of some extra fruit. The buns are distinctive in their appearance due to their lack of a piped cross. Instead, the baker cuts the cross into the top of the bun with a knife.





A Night in June

The sun has long been set,
The stars are out by twos and threes,
The little birds are piping yet

Among the bushes and the trees;
There's a cuckoo, and one or two thrushes,
And a far-off wind that rushes,

And a sound of water that gushes,
And the cuckoo's sovereign cry
Fills all the hollow of the sky.

By *William Wordsworth*

St. Mary's in the Marketplace is a large historic church in Stockport town centre. We'd love to fill it with small businesses with mission at their heart.

Our ideas:
(we know yours will be better)

- Christian themed Escape Room
We have one already written that just needs someone to run it.
- We have a great kitchen for a Café or Restaurant or Bakery
Ideally, it'd be something amazing (to pay the bills) that will also minister to those without so much to spend.
- Christian Book and Gift Shop
- Your idea...

Run your own Christian business?
Contact the Rector for more info: c.blunt@stockportparish.net

Messy Church- May



This month we celebrated Pentecost. Our activities included a windmill of light, empowered, stained glass, a birthday cake, Pentecost spinner, organic flames, a flame biscuit and a kite.







Using rest to Pray

Most of us think of prayer as a very demanding activity, but did you know it can be extremely restful?

One of the great verses in the Bible says this: 'Be still and know that I am God' (Psalm 46:10). It suggests we experience God most fully when we are still. When we cease rushing around, pausing for a moment of thought and recollection, we are becoming prayerful, and God is very near. Even a break for a morning coffee can be a moment of prayer, if we slow ourselves down and allow our thoughts to turn towards God.

An essential part of resting is to breathe slowly. Christian tradition has always made a connection between prayer and breathing. You can learn to pray to the rhythm of your breathing, using chosen prayer words to focus. As you breathe in, you might say 'Abba', and then as you breathe out, add the word 'Father'. Choose words which are meaningful to you, deliberately slowing your breathing so you become relaxed and peaceful.

Perhaps you have a favourite chair where you are able to unwind easily. For a few moments sit and do nothing. Simply become aware of the present moment, reminding yourself you are in the presence of God. As you feel yourself relax, bask in the knowledge of God's love and acceptance of you. Sense His smile of approval upon you. You don't have to do anything, just 'be' for a moment. This too is prayer. Sometimes we are forced to rest by circumstances... illness, disability, growing older and so on slow us down and we can't rush around like we used to do. Never mind. Don't fight against your circumstances. Enter into the place of rest that God is giving you. He loves you for who you are, not for what you do. Turn your thoughts into prayer and offer them to God. You don't need to advise God as to what He should do; simply hold people before Him, leaving the outcome to Him.

Prayer should be a natural expression of our relationship with God. Sometimes we have words, sometimes silence is enough. We don't need to impress God with our fervour. We can relax and be rested, even as we pray.



With Fathers' Day in mind...

The most effective way to remember your wife's birthday is to forget it once. – *Ogden Nash*

I had some words with my wife, and she had some paragraphs with me. – *Sigmund Freud*

Grace

The graduation banquet was about to begin when the master of ceremonies was informed that the invited clergyman would not be able to attend. He quickly asked the main speaker to give the blessing. The speaker nodded, rose, bowed his head and in all sincerity, said: "There being no clergyman present, let us thank God."

ST ALBAN'S CHURCH, OFFERTON



THE GIFT OF MUSIC

**AN EVENING OF MUSIC
CELEBRATING THE MUSICAL GIFTS
OF THE PEOPLE OF STOCKPORT**

SAT 29 JUNE 7PM



**TICKETS £10 ON THE DOOR,
£5 CONCESSIONS, KIDS FREE**

**'SOUND PRAISES TO THE LORD, ALL THE EARTH, BREAK INTO SINGING
AND MAKE MUSIC' PSALM 98**

Christian leaders killed or disappeared in occupied Ukraine



Into the third year of Russia's occupation of parts of Ukraine, Christian leaders are still being killed, tortured and disappeared. And in Russia, priests who oppose Putin's invasion continue to be imprisoned or silenced. "As President Putin begins his fifth term our partners describe growing pressure on the Church," says Paul Robinson, CEO of UK-based Release International, which supports persecuted Christians worldwide. "And yet," he says, "in the face of fear, insecurity and oppression, hunger for the gospel is growing. We hear reports of churches packed to overflowing and many giving their lives to Christ."

In February, the body of a Ukrainian Orthodox priest was found in the streets of Kalanchak in Russian-occupied Kherson. He was 59-yr-old Stepan Podolchak. According to his bishop, Russian military forces had "tortured Fr Stepan to death". He's not the first Christian leader to be dragged away and dispatched by the occupying forces. Fr Stepan Podolchak was seized on 13th February and hauled away barefoot with a bag over his head, according to Norway-based human rights organisation Forum 18. His bruised body was found lifeless in the street two days later. Some reports say he had been shot in the head. But the official cause of death was given as a heart attack. The Kyiv-based Centre for Journalistic Investigations told Forum 18, "He prayed for Ukraine, even under occupation Apparently because of this the Russians took away his life."

It's believed he was taken by operatives of the Russian Interior Ministry's Centre for Countering Extremism. Increasingly, denominations other than President Putin's Russian Orthodox are being regarded as extremists. Along with other priests, Fr Podolchak had been pressured to desert the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and join the Moscow Patriarchate.

United Nations Special Rapporteurs have stated in writing to the Russian authorities their 'serious concern for the alleged enforced disappearances and torture... of clergy in the occupied territories'. In areas of Crimea and Ukraine taken over by Russia since 2014, many religious groups have faced increased persecution under military rule. Churches forcibly closed include those of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, Baptists, and Greek Catholics.

In the Eastern Ukraine town of Balaklija, the Russian-appointed city mayor went into the chapel and declared: 'There will be no God here. There will be no Christians. Only the Moscow Orthodox Church.' The occupiers looted the building before confiscating it.

Watching birds is positively good for you

So says a new study out of North Carolina State University. It goes on to say that watching birds is even more beneficial to us than watching other forms of wildlife. The new study found that birdwatchers' recorded 'distress' levels dropped by 13.7 per cent, compared to that of nature-walkers' at 6.9 per cent. The study suggests that the reason may be that birds provide their own narrative and sense of drama, which can be enough to lift someone watching them out of the everyday. The author and presenter Kate Humble agrees. "There is something reassuring about life continuing and nature just getting on with it, even if it feels like the rest of the world is falling to bits. Birdwatching makes me feel part of a bigger, richer, beautiful picture. Birds give me an excuse to explore and find some solitude and calmness away from the bustle of life," says James Lowen, author of *52 Wildlife Weekends*. "It helps put me in my place."



Techie trouble

The vicar at our local church experienced some technical problems with the sound system one Sunday. Instead of starting the service as usual with 'The Lord be with you', he said: "There's something wrong with the microphone."



Not hearing this, the congregation responded: "And also with you."

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING BANK
at St. Alban's Church, Offerton
Offerton Lane, Stockport, SK2 5AG



Free children's clothes for anyone in need on:

the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month at
9.30am - 10.30am.

and the 1st Saturday of the month
2pm-3pm.

We also accept donations of good quality children's clothes for re-distribution
www.stalbanofferton.org.uk

St Alban's Church, Offerton
invites you to

**FRIENDLY
FRIDAY
COFFEE
MORNING**

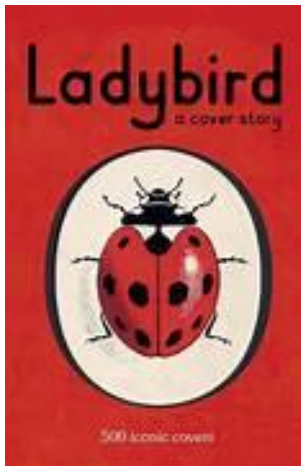


every Friday 10am-12pm



The Wonderful World of Ladybird Books



I'm really excited about a new exhibition running at my local museum this summer. It promises to prompt joyful memories of childhood for many older people – and maybe remind them of when they first learnt about Jesus.

'The Wonderful World of the Ladybird Artists' aims to "uncover the story of the talented artists who illustrated Ladybird books for more than 30 years." It's a fascinating exhibition that has already been staged in cities from Canterbury to Northumberland and is at the St Albans Museum until 8th September.

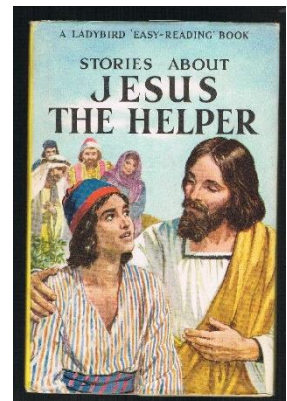
The organisers say: "This colourful, family-friendly exhibition includes rare books, original artwork and artefacts, and reveals how illustrators played such an enormous role in Ladybird's extraordinary success."

Ladybird Books also played a vital role in thousands of Sunday Schools and churches in the UK and many other English-speaking countries from the 1940s until well into the 1970s.

For many children and young people, these books were their first introduction to the Bible, with numerous parents, grandparents and carers reading them as bedtime stories. 'Easy Reading' versions helped many children read about Jesus for themselves.

I've been collecting some of the Bible-based copies of the Ladybird books from local charity shops, with titles such as 'Stories about Jesus the Helper,' 'Children of the Bible' and 'Two Stories Jesus Told,' featuring the classic parables, the Good Samaritan and The Prodigal Son. I've been struck by the faithful retelling of the Bible stories, and the quality of the illustrations.

These colourful books were a staple of many Scripture classes and Sunday School prize-giving and helped form the Biblical understanding of a generation of children. Today, the books have become very collectible, with prices on the rise.



Ladybird books were, naturally, a product of their times with, for example, the skin tones of Jesus and the apostles often lighter than what reality might have been. The books were produced for a time when Bible stories were more widely known, and families were routinely depicted as mum, dad, a son and a daughter.

In recent years, more bizarre incarnations of Ladybird Books – such as 'The Ladybird Book of the Zombie Apocalypse' – have introduced new audiences to the Ladybird style, with an ironic, comic twist.

Personally, I much prefer the originals!

Editor: Revd Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former communications director for the C of E.



Memories Funerals

Offerton

Bunley

Edgeley

Bereavement Group

Join us on the first Wednesday of each month
at St Alban's Church, Offerton between
1pm and 3pm

Starting Wednesday 5th June 2024

All Are Welcome!



St. Alban's Church
Offerton

info@memoriesfuneralservice.com
0161 302 9753
www.memoriesfuneralservice.com

Welcome



We welcome into our church family -

Rosie Orla Cawthra who was baptised on 12th May 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

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 (1st Saturday of month)