



Keep in touch with St Alban's Church

November 2023

To Contact the Church.....

Parish Office: 0161 477 0456 **(Mon & Fri 9.30-12.30)**

Email: stalbanofferton@gmail.com

Priest in charge **Revd. Marie Flint**

Churchwardens Eileen Comerford
David Griffiths

Treasurer David Haslam

P.C.C. Secretary Janet Renshaw

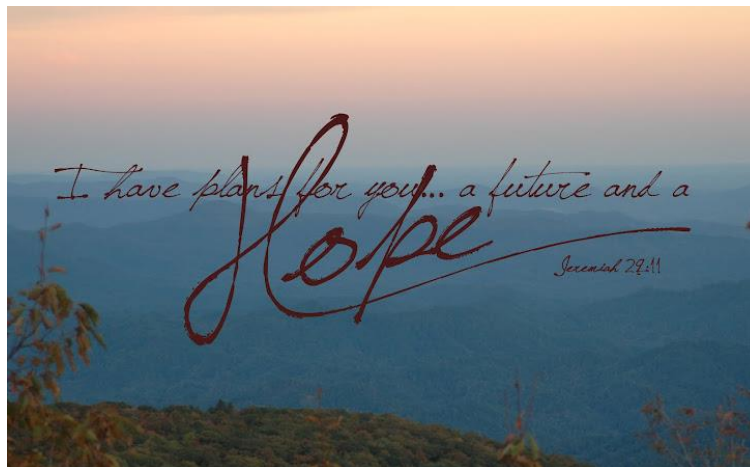
You can find lots of information about the church and its activities on our Parish Website:

www.stalbanofferton.org.uk



St. Alban's Church Offerton

Marie writes-



As we come to November and the season of Remembrance, we still have fresh in our minds those people in our families and congregation and neighbourhoods who died from Covid. And the world now seems a different place. Our hearts are heavy with the conflicts and struggles that persists across the world. And here we are in All Saints Tide and the season of Remembrance, where are prompted to reflect on the loss and sacrifices made by countless individuals whilst holding onto the hope of peace and justice in the future. Because Remembrance is not just about the past – it is also about the present and the future.

The act of remembrance is a powerful and enduring tradition that binds us together as a community. It reminds us of the courage and selflessness of people who have served and continue to serve in the armed forces – often in places and situations that we can't begin to imagine. We honour their dedication to upholding the principles of peace and freedom and give thanks for their sacrifice, recognising the hardship they endure.

When we read the news and see images of innocent people being affected by war, it is easy for us to feel down. But, as Christians, holding onto hope is really important. We hope for an end to violence and division, for the safe return of people far from home and for the healing of wounds both visible and invisible. We hope for a world that learns lessons from the past, so that the future is peaceful.

As people of faith, we know that hope isn't passive. Hope is active. We are called to work towards peace, justice, and reconciliation in our own lives and in our community. This active hope, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, can be a powerful force for change.

So, let us be bearers of hope in our parish. Let us, as a community of Jesus followers in this small part of the world, shine light into the darkness and be a source of inspiration for a world in need of peace.

Marie

A prayer for World peace

O God of the nations, as we look to that day when you will gather people from north and south, east and west, into the unity of your peaceable Kingdom, guide with your just and gentle wisdom all who take counsel for the nations of the world, that all your people may spend their days in security, freedom, and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.



Macmillan coffee morning

Many thanks to all who baked, joined in, and helped at the Macmillan coffee morning on Friday 29th September which raised over £300.



Coming up

- **All Saints Day** – Wednesday 1st November – whole parish service at St John's 10.30 am.
- **Commemoration of the Faithful Departed** – service on Thursday 2nd November at 7.30pm at St. Alban's.
- **REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE** - Please join us at 10.30 am on Sunday 12th November
- St. Alban's Christmas Fair on 9th December
- Paint the ceiling fundraising concert on Sunday 12th November at 3pm at St. Thomas'
- Stockport Major's Prayer Breakfast on November 16th. An easy way to book - www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/stockport-mayors-prayer-breakfast-tickets-730415551577



A CONTEMPORARY SERVICE OF MUSIC, PRAISE AND PRAYER

ON THE 4th SUNDAY OF THE MONTH AT 4PM.

26th November – Christ the King

24th December—Christingle

The excitement of the Sunday of Christ the King

26th November



The last Sunday in November is the last Sunday of the church year, and in some ways the most important. Why? Because everything else in the Christian year looks BACK on what happened 2000 years ago. The Sunday of Christ the King looks FORWARD to what we can expect next.... the return one day of Jesus Christ to this earth, as King of Kings.

Does the idea of Jesus of Nazareth literally returning to earth seem a bit quaint to accept, in our computerised world of e-mails and the internet? Well, that is what the Bible says will happen – *it is promised more than 250 times!*

The Bible is quite clear: the return of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of Kings will take place personally, powerfully, bodily, visibly, publicly – and INSTANTLY. (Read Matthew 24:30,31, or I Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:3.) Here are words of Jesus Himself:

For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. (Luke 17:24)

This will be no local story for a BBC TV reporter to cover if he gets time. That day he won't be interviewing the Carpenter of Nazareth, wearing Galilean homespun. Jesus will be in His incandescent brilliance as the 'Son of Man' – a bit of a challenge even for TV reporters! Certainly when Peter, James and John were witness to their familiar Master 'transfigured', as the same irradiated Person – in a dramatic preview of Christ's triumphant final rule (Luke 9:28-36), they did not feel very confident.

The martyred Stephen, about to die, had a similar glimpse: "Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). The exiled apostle John on the island of Patmos saw the same figure: '...His face was like the sun shining in full strength' (Revelation 1:16.)

When Christ one day returns, the whole world will finally witness this same spectacle (Revelation 1:7). His return will mark the end of history, as we know it. It will inaugurate the final Judgment. It will re-unite the Lord with His Church on earth.

Jesus' return to us will bring about the new heaven and the new earth. Pain, death, persecution, privation, and sorrow will all be banished. The entire edifice of evil that has raised itself against the rule of God will be dismantled in a moment.

We have been warned all along not to place a date or a time upon the Second Coming of Christ. (Matthew 24:42-44) Sadly, many people ignore this warning and waste endless time in calculations. The way in which we should be spending our days before the end is to work, watch and witness to our Lord Jesus – whether or not ours is a world of computers, e-mail and all the rest!

In the meantime, where is Jesus now? The Bible writers tells us that Jesus has returned to the place of privilege and power, and is 'seated at the right hand' of the Father (Ephesians 1:20-21; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3), and is waiting for the Father's timing for Him to return to earth in glory (Mark 13:26-27,32), to raise the dead (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), and give them their resurrection bodies (1 Corinthians 15:35-44).

Jesus will never be a baby again. He is now Christ the King – today, tomorrow, forever.

Be a stained-glass window

People are like stained glass windows.

We glow and sparkle when it is sunny and bright outside. But it is only when the sun goes down that our true beauty is revealed – and then only if there is a light deep within us – the light of God.



Keep safe on Bonfire Night

St Alban's going for Bronze in 2024



WORLD KINDNESS DAY

13th November 2023

Make the world a kinder place; little things make the world go around. Give compliments, smile at strangers, hold a door open for someone, give up your seat on a crowded train or bus.

Always be careful.

Give extra long hugs to family and friends....kindness and connection go hand in hand, take a few extra minutes to hug loved ones and friends. They might wonder what's got into you, but they'll appreciate it nonetheless!!

Text a friend you haven't contacted in a while & say Hi.



PREPARE FOR A GREENER CHRISTMAS

Christmas is both a celebration of Christ's coming but we can make it better for His creation.

Here are a few Eco Christmas ideas – there's more on the ECO newsletter

- Collect holly sprigs, ivy trails, pinecones, rose hips... Don't take too much and do leave some berries for the birds. Make a beautiful wreath and Christmas decorations from natural materials.

- Bake goods or buy gifts from a charity shop. Buy an attractive glass or vase and fill it with chocolates or flowers. Kilner jars, and other glass jars, filled with small items also make attractive gifts.
- Use LED Christmas lights help to save energy and money. Use eco-friendly candles made from beeswax, soy or other vegetable alternatives.
- Christmas increases our countries waste. Paper Recycling – most wrapping paper is not recyclable. You can test it by doing the ‘scrunch’ test. If it springs back, it isn’t recyclable. And always remove the Sellotape. No Glitter or foil. Recycle your Christmas Cards.

Remember the reason for the season. Practising generosity and hospitality is a great way to show Christ’s love at Christmas. Perhaps you could invite someone who’d otherwise be on their own, to join you one day over the Christmas period.

Carry on caring for God’s earth throughout the year. Nature needs us more than ever. Choose a change to make this Christmas. Be gentle on yourself and be realistic but challenge yourself too.

Vegetarian Christmas Day Recipe

Goats Cheese, squash and mushroom pithivier

For one person – preheat oven to 180C Fan/Gas 6

INGREDIENTS

3cm thick slice of butternut squash, seeds removed, cut from the wide end of the squash so it’s a ring doughnut shape.

5 chestnut mushrooms – halved

Drizzle of vegetable oil

10g blanched hazelnuts

1 garlic glove – mashed

Leaves from ½ a rosemary sprig – chopped.

1 medium free-range egg – beaten

320g sheet of ready rolled puff pastry

½ of a 100g wheel of goat’s cheese – cut horizontally to create a thinner disc of cheese.

METHOD

- Put the ring of squash on a baking tray along with the mushrooms. Drizzle with the oil, season with salt and roast for 12 minutes. Add the hazelnuts to one side of the tray and roast for further 8 minutes.
- Place the squash on a plate to cool. Put the nuts and mushrooms in a food processor with the garlic, rosemary and 2/3 of the egg, whizz to a coarse paste and season, then let it cool.
- When all is cooled, roll out the pastry flat and cut two discs on 3cm larger than the squash ring the other 5cm larger. Place the smaller circle of pastry on a baking tray, and place the squash ring in the centre, place the goat’s cheese in the centre hole (this may need



trimming) Cover with the mushroom/nut mixture and using your hands make into a dome shape.

- Brush a little of the remaining egg around the edge of the larger pastry circle and place on the top of your dome, smooth it down over the dome and press the pastry edges together.
- Make a small hole in the top, and lightly score the dome with a sharp knife. Brush with more egg, cover, and chill until ready to cook. Can be put in the freezer for later
- Heat the oven to 200C fan /Gas 7. Bake on a baking sheet for 30 minutes (40 minutes if frozen) until the pastry is a deep golden colour.

Hope this taste as good as it sounds

Prayer for November

O' Lord, we thank you for our lives and the wonderful things you have done for us. We thank you for what you have done for our families, church, and nation. We ask that you help us to remain focused on how good you have been to us and the ones we love. Thank you for helping us to stay grateful and in constant remembrance of your goodness. Cleanse our hearts and give us peace, love, patience, and kindness to display your love for all to see.

Thank you for listening to our prayers, set us ablaze with your love.

Amen.

*Thanks
Janet*

Welcome



We welcome into our church family -

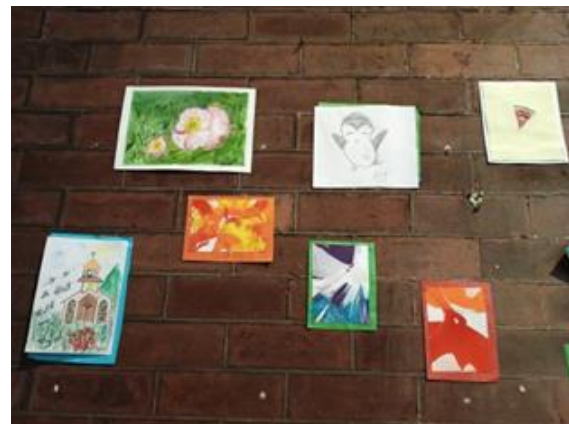
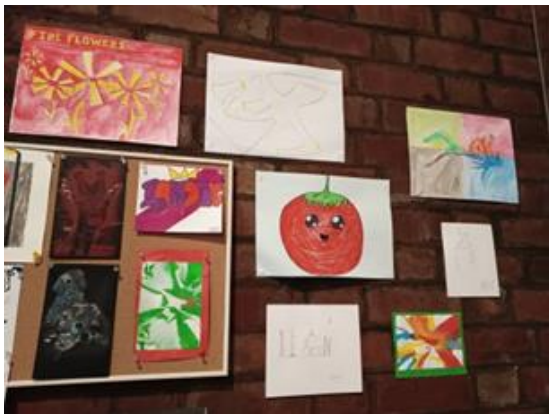
Mariella Elisabeth Andeke who was baptised on 8th October 2023

Messy Church October

Included pocket hearts, edible dinosaur pancakes, light celebration, woven together, food family, heritage photo frame, paper bag gift, leaf family and silly fish family.



Our Harvest Exhibition



A bit of a laugh!

Scare it

A man had the courage – but not always the skills – to tackle any home-repair project. For example, his garage was littered with the pieces of a lawn mower he had tried to fix. One day his wife found him in the living room, attacking the vacuum cleaner with a screwdriver. “I can’t get this thing to cooperate!” he exclaimed.

His wife replied, “Why don’t you just drag it out to the garage and show it what happened to the lawn mower?”



Died in the services

Little Alex was staring up at the large brass plaque that hung on the side wall of the church. The plaque was covered with names, and it seemed to fascinate the seven-year-old. “All those names,” he said to the minister. “Who are they?”

“Well, they were people who used to go to this church,” explained the minister. “This is a memorial to all the young men and women who died in the services.”

Soberly, they stood together, staring at the large plaque. Little Alex’s voice was barely audible when he asked, “Which service, the 9 o’clock, or the 11 o’clock?”



Remembering National Service – 60 years on

This year marks 60 years since the end of National Service. The Royal British Legion and the nation will be celebrating all that a generation of young men did for this country during those years, when conscription became just a part of growing up.

National Service drew in a staggering number of young men – more than two million of them were conscripted between the end of the Second World War and May 1963, when the last serviceman was demobbed.

Conscription had come about following the war, when there was a huge demand for military resources in Britain. Young service men were badly needed to retain the Empire, and to contribute to the occupation of Germany and Japan. Yet low birth rates in Britain in the 1930s meant there were fewer young men available for military service.

And so the 1947 National Service Act was brought in as a solution. It meant that young men aged 18 – 26 were required to serve in the Armed Forces for 18 months. They were sent to posts in the UK and to British garrisons around the world. Some fought on the front lines, and some worked as clerks. Some taught in the Education Corps, and some were on sentry duty.

For many of them, it would have been the first time they lived away from their family, let alone left the country. The National Service made great demands on them – and left them with a wide range of experiences.



The month of Remembrance may be especially poignant this year. Russia's invasion of Ukraine grinds on, and now there is trouble between Azerbaijan and Armenia & Israel and Hamas. Millions of people's lives are being turned upside down, with no hope of peace and security in sight. It is indeed a time for Christians everywhere to pray for peace, based on justice and mercy. It also a time to remember the victims of natural disasters this year: the floods in Libyan, the Moroccan earthquake, as well as the wildfires in Greece, Spain, Canada, and the USA.

We Remember

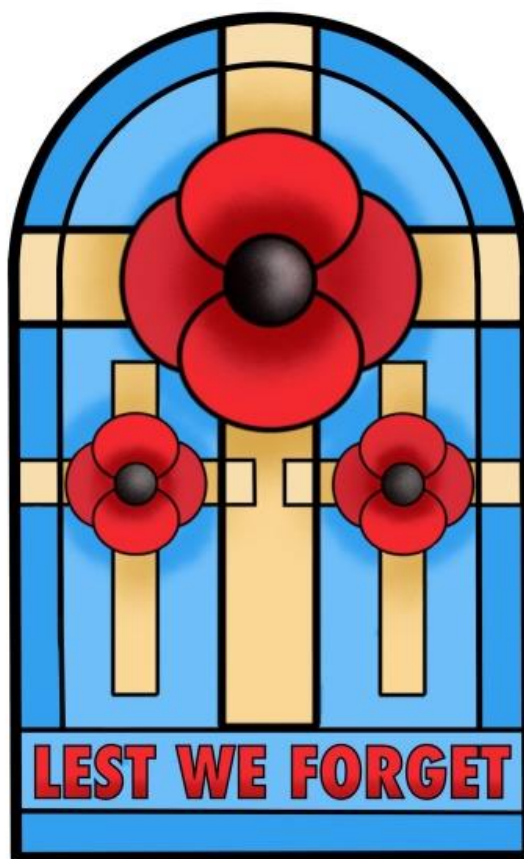
The Somme, Dunkirk and Passchendaele
Cause us to think of times of war,
When men and boys went bravely out
They fought, some died and returned no
more.

They gave their all that we should live,
We never should forget such cost,
Remembering with thankful hearts
Our freedom gained as lives were lost.

Another Man gave up His life,
Another war, another fight,
With all mankind held fast in chains
As darkness fell as black as night.

The cost was high, a sinless life
To break the chains and set us free,
The Lamb of God on Calvary's cross
Paid that price for you, for me.

By Megan Carter



Ten Years on- Minister reflects on terror attack that killed his mother

A minister whose mother and 19 relatives were murdered by terrorists a decade ago has told how he has resisted feelings of revenge and hatred. The Revd Aftab Gohar said he found peace through the teachings of Jesus Christ, following a double suicide bomber attack at All Saints Church in Peshawar, Pakistan on 22nd September, 2013.



Worshippers had just left the building to join the fellowship meal on the lawn when two explosions ripped through the crowd, killing 122 people and injuring more than 250. Among them was Mr Gohar's 79-year-old mother, his nieces, nephews, cousins, uncles, aunts and friends. The minister of Eddlestone, Peebles Old Parish, and Stobo and Drumelzier churches in the Scottish Borders, said they "died for their faith" and that surviving family members still miss them terribly.

Founded in 1947, Pakistan's constitution gives every citizen 'the right to profess, practice, and propagate his religion'.

However, the official religion is Islam, and religious minorities are frequently attacked, with Pakistan's blasphemy laws being used to discriminate against non-Muslims. Mr Gohar believes that the controversial law is used to justify attacks, such as a recent spate of church and house burnings in Jaranwala near Faisalabad.

Early this autumn, he and other campaigners handed over a petition to Syed Zahid Raza, Consul General of Pakistan for Scotland and Northern Ireland, at the Consulate of Pakistan in Glasgow. It called on the government of Pakistan to improve safety for religious minorities and use the blasphemy law to punish those who desecrate Bibles and burn down churches and homes.

It was on 22nd September, 2013, when Mr Gohar was preparing to lead a church service, that he received a text message to say there had been a bombing in Pakistan and his mother and other relatives had died. "It was hard for me to forgive those responsible, but with the strength of God I did so and freed myself from the extra burden of hatred and revenge.

"On the cross, Jesus prayed for those who were crucifying Him: 'Forgive them Father, they don't know what they are doing.' "Jesus said 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you' – a lesson that some people find impossible to follow."

Mr Gohar was inspired by the words of Corrie Ten Boom, a Dutch watchmaker who helped Jewish people escape the Nazis during the Holocaust. "She said 'forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuff of hatred,' added the minister. "It is a power that breaks chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness." Mr Gohar grew up in Peshawar and was ordained into the Church of Pakistan in 1995. After studying in Edinburgh he served at Abbotsgrange Parish Church in Grangemouth until his move to the Scottish Borders last year. Mr Gohar and his wife Samina and their two grown up sons, Shahan, and Zeeshan, are now British citizens.

The Church of Scotland has an official partnership with the Church of Pakistan, which is marking the 10th anniversary of the atrocity.

St Alban's 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
- 4.00pm 4@4 A Contemporary Service (4th Sunday only)

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 only)