Services at Alton in November 2021

Sunday 7th **32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

10.00am Pam Jones

Sunday 14th **Remembrance Sunday**

10.00am Rev Philip Simpkins

Sunday 21st **Sunday before Advent**

10.00am Liz George

Sunday 28th **Advent Sunday**

10.00am Rev Philip Simpkins - GAP service

6.30pm *GAP Advent Carols at St Lawrence*

CONTACT US

Church Office: Email altonmethodist@hotmail.com (Tel 01420 82695)

The church office is not usually staffed. Emails will be picked up and passed on to the relevant person, but answerphone messages may be overlooked.

For pastoral matters, please phone or email Rev Philip Simpkins.
Tel: 01420 83167 Email: philip.simpkins@methodist.org.uk

For administrative matters, including bookings, please contact Mrs Liz George via the church email address (above) or Tel 01420 561543

Items for inclusion in the **December** issue of the **"Newsletter"** should reach the editor, Nancy Buck, by noon **Sunday 21st November** at the latest, please.

If you are able to email your contribution to the office (or to Nancy) it would be much appreciated.

Alton Methodist Church

NEWSLETTER

November 2021

Minister: Rev. Philip Simpkins
Tel: 01420 83167
Church website www.altonmethodist.org.uk
Circuit website www.hsbcircuit.org.uk

Dear Friends,

Over the October half term Angela and I will be travelling down to the New Forest for a few days away in this beautiful part of the country.

We hope to enjoy some invigorating walks through the woods and stopping to watch the New Forest ponies roaming at leisure.

We also imagine a brisk stroll along the beach, no doubt visiting a café for tea and cake at every opportunity!

On our return we will be sharing in the **'Candles of Remembrance' Service at 4pm on Oct 31st.** A quiet and reflective opportunity to light a candle and remember those who have died and have been so dear to us. Everyone is invited as are those for whom we have conducted funeral services for in the community in more recent times. We are thankful for all the ordinary, yet special saints that have gone before us.

Remembrance Day will be honoured in our service on November 14th at 10am.

Due to Covid limitations there will not be the usual parade through the town this year as in previous years. Wreaths will however be laid at the Cairn during a short service led by Rev Andrew Micklefield and whilst anyone can attend it will be more low key than usual to avoid crowding.

We look forward to the return of the **Christmas Fair at our church on Saturday 27th November.** It is such an enjoyable social occasion as well as a welcome fund raiser.

Dates for your Diary

OCTOBER		
Sun 31	4.00pm	Candles of Remembrance Service
NOVEMBER		
Tues 2	2.30pm	Church House Group
	7.00pm	*Prayer Walking from North Camp MC*
Sun 7	3.00pm	Anna Chaplaincy Open Forum
Mon 8	*7.30pm*	*Lent Course discussion at Alton Maltings*
Tues 9	12.30pm	Lunch Club
Tues 16	2.30pm	Church House Group
Sat 20		*CAMEO outing to Avenue Nurseries*
Thurs 25	*10.00am*	*Ladies @ Wetherspoons*
Sat 27	10.00-12.00	Christmas Fair
Sun 28	*6.30pm*	*GAP Advent Carols at St Lawrence*
Tues 30	2.30pm	Church House Group
DECEMBER		
Fri 3	10.00-12.00	Action for Children Coffee Morning

Please look at articles in the Newsletter giving more information.

The December issue of the Newsletter should be available from Sunday 28th November.

Eco Corner

Time to drive electric?

The more I chat to people, the more they are saying 'my next car will be electric'. Electric cars are quiet, smooth and sprightly and, if those are good enough reasons for you, then why not go ahead?

Just because your electric car window sticker may proclaim that you are driving CO_2 free, that is not really true. Carbon dioxide is released during the manufacturing of the car and, for some years to come, electricity generation itself will not be CO_2 free, particularly if driving in a country with large numbers of coal or gas-fired power stations.

Many writers have attempted to calculate the through-life release of CO_2 from electric cars and to compare them with petrol cars. Roughly speaking, a small electric car, such as the Nissan Leaf, has a through - life CO_2 release of 125 gms/Km. This compares with the most efficient European conventional car at 175 gm/Km. So, the electric car wins, but it is not CO_2 - free. Also, no CO_2 release was added for recycling of the Lithium battery at the end of its life. While our small electric car may be a winner over petrol, big 4X4 SUVs use about three times as much electricity, putting them into a band where the electricity costs may exceed those of diesel.

Finally, the Treasury makes about £20.9 billion each year from fuel tax (petrol, diesel and gas). How long before they find a way of taxing electricity for cars, I wonder and how will they allow for users who charge their batteries from solar panels on their property?

Watch this space!

Nigel Hughes

On **Sunday 28th November at 10am we will share in a GAP service at our church** along with friends from the CofE Parish. This is a long-awaited opportunity to share fellowship together, being in a covenanted relationship. It will also be an opportunity to say thank you to Rev Rachel Sturt as she retires from her post as Anna Chaplain. Rachel will be much missed by so many of us in this role. Her care amongst our nursing, residential and independent living folk has been much appreciated, as has her involvement in community groups like lunch club, library club and 'The Hard of Hearing' group to name by a few.

We are in the planning stages for a new Anna Chaplain which we hope can be appointed early in the new year. Prayerful and financial support is always appreciated for this pioneering work begun in Alton over 10 years ago and now spread throughout the country.

At 6.30pm on Sunday 28th November there will be a second opportunity to join with our CofE friends at an **Advent Carol Service** held within St Lawrence Church.

Let us enjoy the beauty of the autumn season and treasure the God who is faithful in all the changing scenes of life.

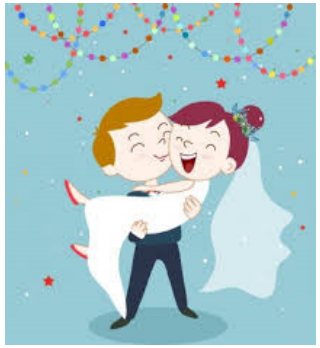
Through all the changing scenes of life,
In trouble and in joy,
The praises of my God shall still
My heart and tongue employ.

Every blessing

Philip

Alton Methodist Church is in a covenant partnership with the Parish of the Resurrection in the Greater Alton project.

Congratulations!



Ray and Shirley Benjamin celebrate 67 years of marriage on the 26th October.

David and Geraldine Mason celebrate 53 years of marriage on the same date.

Anna Chaplaincy

Rachel Sturt finishes her time as Anna Chaplain in early December. We will be saying our thank yous to Rachel in our GAP Service on Advent Sunday Nov. 28th at the Methodist Church which we hope you will be able to attend.

In the meantime, there is a small group of people who are looking at the job description and other relevant paperwork as we move towards making a new appointment.

To help this process we would like to hear from others.

We are going to hold an:

Open Forum at 3pm on Sunday 7th November

at Alton Methodist Church

Where we can think of all the good things that we celebrate in Anna Chaplaincy here in Alton, dream some dreams and evaluate our resourcing going forward. **We would love to have a really good conversation so please do come along.**

John Wheeler - a life well lived

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of John Wheeler on Saturday 25th September.

The funeral service on 14th October was well attended and it was a joy to be reminded of how much in the way of work, hobbies and service he had packed into his life.

His contribution to the life of our church will be sorely missed.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Olive, David, Caroline and all the family as they come to terms with their sudden loss.

Inkjet cartridge recycling

I've been looking for a new place to recycle my empty inkjet cartridges and came across Recycle4Charity.co.uk. They will pay money for used cartridges to a charity of your choice – the amount varies according to the type of cartridge and whether it is an 'original' or has already been re-filled.

I've set up an account there for Alton Methodist Church and am willing to collect cartridges to send off. So if you have some empty inkjet cartridges and would like to use them to raise a bit of money for the church, please pass them to me on a Sunday morning.

Nancy Buck

Mercy Ships

As we seek to be informed and support the work of Mercy Ships this year our feature this month is on the volunteers who work with this vital charity.

The Mercy Ships crew is led by a team of volunteers from up to 40 nations, all of whom give their time and expertise for free! Mercy Ships doesn't just take doctors and nurses – the ship is a small city, with cooks, teachers, receptionists, mechanics, IT specialists, engineers and cleaners.

28-year-old volunteer dentist Ailsa Malone, from Stirling, has served onboard the Africa Mercy multiple times, most recently in Guinea.

I first heard of Mercy Ships in 2010, when I was at university and planning an undergraduate dental elective. At that time I wasn't able to volunteer because I didn't have two years' experience, but I knew immediately it was something I would love to do in the future.

I first volunteered with Mercy Ships in 2015 in Madagascar and it was one of the most amazing and inspiring experiences of my life. The dental work was difficult – witnessing the level of dental neglect was heart-breaking, and the days were long and hard work because we wanted to provide as much treatment as possible. But the patients were very grateful to be seen, and it was incredibly rewarding to be able to relieve them of pain. Most of the patients had never seen a dentist before, and many had travelled long distances for treatment.

https://www.mercyships.org.uk/ (used with permission from Mercy Ships)

Lent Course – have your say!

We know that it is only autumn and Christmas is the next big thing...but...we need to begin to plan and prepare for the Lent Course 2022 which happens in the run up to Easter. Before lockdown we had run this as 'Alton Churches Together' and that is what we would like to do again. If you are interested in helping us think about it, plan and prepare then why not come to a meeting on **Monday 8th November at 7.30pm** at Alton Maltings. All ideas welcome and be good to see a good number of people.

Andrew Micklefield, Andrew Lawrence, Ben Burge and Philip Simpkins

Order Your Christmas Cards Now!

As last year Christmas Cards can be bought in packs of 10 cards from Debby Bridger (01420-86910) or debby_bridger@yahoo.co.uk. There are two designs, and the cost is £2.25 per pack of 10 cards. The message inside says:

'Wishing you a peaceful and blessed Christmas'

(The above is a scanned copy only!)

Thank you, Debby!

Living Advent Calendar

We have decided to run another Parish of the Resurrection Living Advent Calendar as we had so much fun last year. We'd love you to join in and spread some festive cheer.

The idea is that each volunteer will be given a date in December to reveal their Christmas Advent window display – you can use painting, lights, models as long as it has a Christmas or seasonal theme, displays the number for that date and a Christmas Bible verse of your choice.

Once you have revealed your window we ask you to keep it displayed until after Christmas. Each day a new window will be revealed and you can walk around Alton and Holybourne to find the new window. We will provide a map with the houses marked to help you navigate.

If you wish to volunteer please ensure your house has a window (upstairs or downstairs) that is visible from the street. Please make sure you are happy to keep the window illuminated each evening after it is 'opened' until after Christmas and are happy to have people stop and admire your window. Please be aware that by agreeing to participate you are also agreeing to have your address (but not your name) identified on our website and on the map so people can look for your window.

Please contact Ellie on potradventwindows@gmail.com for more information or to be allocated a 'day'. There are lots of design ideas on the internet.

Queen's Badge, the Boys' Brigade's highest award. They had a meeting with Mr Cox, our Battalion's Queen's Badge Advisor, to talk through the requirements and identify the activities they will undertake. Some elements of the Queen's Badge match those of the Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award; as both boys are working on that Award already they are well set to complete both of these significant achievements over the next year or so. The Company will provide the support and encouragement that they might need.

Annual Enrolment Service

On Sunday 24th October, together with the 2nd Alton Girls' Brigade, our Company were able to parade to the Church, marching behind the band and our Colours. Being unable to hold this Parade and Service 12 months ago due to the pandemic, it was wonderful to meet up on a clear, sunny morning; a morning perfect for marching and for gathering together in God's presence to offer our thanks and praise.

The Enrolment Service is the annual opportunity to re-dedicate ourselves to the Brigades as Leaders, Helpers, Members and as a Church, so that together with God's grace, we work to fulfill the Brigades' missions to spread the Good News of Christ's Kingdom to young people.

The service also reminded us all that we are caretakers of this amazing and beautiful world that our Lord created; we have a responsibility to make it a better place for ourselves and for future generations. The boys and girls of the Brigades seem keenly aware of the issues facing the planet; as well as taking action themselves, they can also be the messengers to the adults, reminding us that **"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."** (Genesis 2:15 [NIV]).

Lt. Rolfe Bridson

Christmas Fair at Alton Methodist Church

Saturday 27th November, 10 am-12 noon

After a year's break we're planning to hold a Christmas Fair again as a fundraiser for the church. The following selection of stalls are planned and donations of goods to sell would be most welcome:-

Cakes	Helen Smith
Fancy Goods	Terri White
Jewellery & Accessories	Judith Janes
Toys	Jennie Marlow
Baskets	Christine Allan

In addition, Judy Nicholls and her team in the Café will be there to refresh all weary shoppers, Pam Jones will be bringing her art works, there'll be beautiful turned-wood creations to buy and the Boys' and Girls' Brigade will be taking part too.

This event traditionally has a great atmosphere – so book the date and join the fun!

If you have goods to donate, please contact the relevant stall-holder or me to arrange delivery/collection or bring to the church on the evening of Friday 26th November, about 9.30pm, or on Saturday 27th from 9am. All rooms of the premises are used by outside groups during the week and by BB on Friday evening so goods should not be left here in advance.

Nancy Buck (01420 85994)

CAMEO

At our October meeting we enjoyed an interesting and entertaining talk

from Ann Foulkes, an enthusiastic member of ALFI (Alton Local Food Initiative).

We learned about the origins of the initiative and saw photographs - both "before" and "after" - of the community plots around the town which are planted and maintained by ALFI members.

Ann also told us about the organisation's participation, as part of a new Community Gardens section, at this year's Hampton Court Flower Show. She said that those who visited the ALFI exhibit were amazed to learn that the produce raised on the plots is free for anyone who wants it!

CAMEO's next meeting will be on **Saturday 20th November** when they travel to Avenue Nurseries for lunch and Christmas shopping.

Judy Nicholls

Church House Group

We had our first Bible study meeting and nine of us talked about where we had come from in our faith journey. Interestingly only two started out as Methodists! We are going to be looking at Ephesians and we plan to meet at 2.30pm on Tuesday 2nd, 16th and 30th November. I know there are a few more people who would like to join us, so do come along.

Jennie Marlow

We finished the morning by sitting together to share our packed lunches and talk about our favourite parts of the morning.

Glenda Bentley

Company Section

Parade Nights

The Company has met on Fridays with a range of activities on each evening.

Drill has been a focus for most of the boys: it has been a long time since they marched together and completed the various manoeuvres. Successful drill requires practice under the command and watchful eye of Mr Allan. A Drill competition is an important part of the Day of Action in the Spring, when our Company will compete against the drill squads of other Companies in the Battalion.

Whilst the older boys have been drilling, our newest member has been finding out more about the Boys' Brigade and the Company in preparation for his Compass Badge test. On the last Friday before half-term he passed the test, earning himself the Compass Badge which also means he can now wear the uniform of a Company member, just in time for the Sunday Parade and Enrolment Service.

Each Friday evening there is also a period for games that the boys participate in enthusiastically. Church members who know the hall as the place for a quiet chat with friends over a cup of tea after the morning service, may find it difficult to imagine the caldron of sporting endeavour it is turned into by the boys on a Friday evening. Non-stop cricket is the current favourite game of the boys; it results in fewer bruises to the shins than arise from the playing unihoc (indoor hockey), though you do need to keep an eye out for the ball or you may find yourself startled as it whistles past your ear.

Queen's Badge candidates

Two of our Senior boys have embarked on the activities required to earn the

2nd Alton Company

Well, we have made it to half-term and had a church parade!

The parade was for our (and the GB's) enrolment service. It is always good to see all the young people together in church, and everybody making their promises for the coming year.

Friday nights are just about back to normal at the moment, and band practice has resumed on Wednesday evenings along with expedition classes for Duke of Edinburgh's award and Young Venturers.

Battalion events have been and are being planned for the year ahead; unfortunately one has been cancelled already, but we are hopeful that everything else will go ahead.

I can tell you that planning for next year's summer camp with the 1st Woodley has already started, and with any luck, will be able to confirm a date and location in the coming weeks.

Pete Burgess (Captain)

Forest Fun for Anchors and Juniors

Five boys from 2nd Alton joined with boys from the rest of our battalion to play games and have fun in Alice Holt Forest on a surprisingly mild October morning.

The boys were grudgingly split into two groups, but by the end of the morning lots of new friendships had been formed.

We hunted for bugs and made sculptures, then with boys in pairs, blindfolded one while his partner guided him round a rope course with obstacles. They met with varying degrees of success but, thankfully, no injuries!

Lunch Club starts up again!

We were all delighted to be back at church lunch club at the start of October! Our numbers were good with several new faces The hall was buzzing with smiles and chatting

We are meeting once a month on the second Tuesday and offer a two-course cooked meal for £3.50 We would be very pleased if you could book and pay in advance.

Please contact Christine Allan on 84739 if you would like to come. **Our next dates are November 9th and December 14th.**

Christine Allan

Ladies @ Wetherspoons

As usual we will be meeting for coffee and chat on the last Thursday of the month. So why not pop in from 10am on **25th November**.

Jennie Marlow

Action for Children Coffee Morning

I'm hoping to hold one of our bumper Coffee Mornings on **Friday 3rd December**, so put a note in your diary and support this good cause.

Jennie Marlow

Autumn Amble - overcast but enjoyable

There were just five people brave enough to tackle the wilds of Alice Holt Forest on a damp, misty morning. But the rain didn't come to anything, and the walk, exploring little-used parts of the forest, was enjoyed by all five. A good meal at The Blue Bell completed a pleasant morning's exercise in beautiful countryside.

In the beech woodland

The (very) muddy bit !

Marathon Success!

Our daughter, Alice Allan, completed the London Marathon, beating her previous best time by 25 minutes and raising £8398.32, including Gift Aid, for her charity Brain Research. Here she is on the final straight to the finish, with Buckingham Palace in the background. Our thanks go to all who donated to Alice's charity. She wore a tag enabling her to be tracked during the run. We were following her marker and it suddenly stopped moving at the turn into Parliament Square. We all feared the worst - and so near to the finish. Panic phone calls to family revealed that they were seeing the same thing. However, a few minutes later we received the message that she had crossed the finish line. WHEW.

Nigel and Ann Hughes

Lighthouse

Our Lighthouse group for children will be meeting on Sundays **14th and 28th November**, during the morning service.

New faces are always welcome. If you'd like more information (or to warn us to be prepared for more children) please speak to Liam & Rachel Sheridan, Nancy Buck or Glenda Bentley or email the church office.

Girls' Brigade News

We have returned to face-to-face meetings at Girls' Brigade and although some girls have decided not to return, we have been delighted to welcome a number of new recruits.

Our Annual Church Parade and Enrolment Service on 24th October saw us welcome 8 new members into our company.

If there are any girls aged from 4 ½ upwards who would like to join us, you would be most welcome.

At Girls' Brigade we offer a range of badgework that introduces you to new life skills, fun & games within a Christian community.

So if you want to come and make friends, share happy times and be inspired, then please make contact with us via our Team Leader, Kym Burgess (Tel 07810 808944).

Kym Burgess