

Alton Methodist Church

NEWSLETTER



Robert Schneider, iStock

May 2026

Minister: Rev. Philip Simpkins

Tel: 01420 83167

Church website www.altonmethodist.org.uk

New Circuit website www.bwvcircuit.org



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



Dear Friends,

Sabbaticals in the Methodist church are mandatory for every Methodist minister in order that we may be 'refreshed, renewed and equipped' for future ministry.

Every seven years ministers are given three months away from the local circuit as a gift from the church.

As you may know, I will be on sabbatical from May, June and July, gradually returning to work during August. In my absence, Liz George has kindly agreed to be your point of contact for any church or pastoral matters, alongside the support of our superintendent minister. We are so blessed to have Liz!

We are also grateful to the Rev David Wilson, who, whilst retired, has newly moved into Alton, and will take our communion services for us. We welcome David and Frances and already appreciate their ministry.

Emily, as our Anna Chaplain is also available to offer pastoral support if someone is in need or in hospital. Please don't forget that you can also contact the Hospital chaplaincy team who will happily visit if requested – we know them well!

The sabbatical begins with a trip to Ireland and the opportunity to walk with a friend along the St Patrick's Way, some 82 miles. We will start in Armagh, visit St Patrick's Cathedral(s) and then begin our pilgrimage along country roads, canal paths, through the mountains, along the coastal path and finishing in the grounds of Downs Cathedral, Downpatrick.

The story of St Patrick has always fascinated me – taken as a slave from England/Wales, working on the Emerald Isle looking after sheep, cows and pigs, escaping by boat, training as a clergyman, becoming a bishop and returning to Ireland to bring Christianity to the land. The story/legend is famous for him driving all the snakes out of Ireland (so we should be ok!) and explaining the mystery of the Trinity with a three-leaf clover/shamrock.

On returning from Ireland, we will then spend time at Bramble Cottage (IOW) where I hope to do some concentrated study on the book of Philippians (New Testament) and the life of David (Old Testament). Of course, all study and no play makes Jack a dull boy – so there will be plenty of time to work on the garden, build a wall, compost heap, tidy the shed and walk along the many bridal paths to enjoy both the wildlife and scenery.

We will also take a trip to Wales (Snowdonia) before attending Rev Kyung Mi's ordination service at the end of June in Shrewsbury Cathedral.

Luke & Mariel, along with their family (brother, sister-in-law, two small children and father) are arriving from Canada towards the end of July and early August – so all in all the time will fly by!

Back within the life of the church, May brings with it the celebration of the Ascension of Jesus (Thursday 14th May) – we used to have a morning off school to walk to church to celebrate that!

Following this we have Pentecost Sunday (May 24th) which relives the story of the disciples being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2) and reminds us that God has given his Spirit to be our help and strength today.

*Spirit of God, unseen as the wind,
Gentle as the dove,
Teach us the truth and help us believe,
Show us the Saviours love. (StF 394)*

Every blessing,

Philip

Thank-you!

As the Online Services finish, after 6 years of faithful outreach and witness, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Liz, Philip, and ALL the contributors. The services have been an important part of my faith journey - thought provoking (sometimes requiring extra research after viewing!); inspiring; and the music uplifting. The services have provided a very valued connection to the worshipping community at Alton Methodist Church and have been tuned into from near and far. Thank you! Chris Lamey

Easter Reflections

The Lent course shared with Christians from our various town churches was very well attended at The Maltings where we reflected on the theme of 'Courage for the Journey' – a course provided by the Salvation Army. Members of our local clergy and visiting speakers including Bishop Philip came to speak and the evenings ended with discussion and fellowship. It is good to meet together across our churches, and whilst we have our differences we all seek to follow Christ.



Good Friday included the opportunity to join friends from the Parish Church with an outdoor re-enactment of the events of Good Friday. Complete with animals from Mill Farm, Rev David Chattell brought the story alive as it was acted out.

Easter Sunday began with the Sunrise service at Beech, and the home of Sarah and Ed Neish. As the mist cleared and the sun rose we read, sang and celebrated the journey of the women



to the tomb, early in the morning on Easter Day. This was a beautiful setting to begin Easter Day, with the fields filled with sheep and paddock/gardens adorned with cowslips. Hot cross buns and coffee followed.

We are grateful to Rev David Wilson for leading a very meaningful Easter Day service in Church with Holy Communion.

The Easter cross was beautifully decorated with greenery and flowers and looked wonderful in the church foyer.

Baptism of Ethan Morley

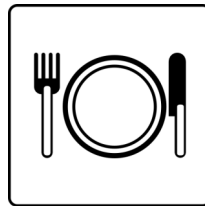
The church was also decorated with balloons and flowers for a very special occasion post Easter when **Ethan Morley was baptised** by Rev Philip during the morning service. He looked very handsome in his bow-tie and everyone loved it when his parents walked around the church with him. A photographer was on hand to send the pictures back to family in Ghana.



It was a privilege to share in this service and welcome friends of Emmanuel and Alberta to our service. The cake afterwards was delicious too!

Lunch Club

The lunch club was well attended once more with people gathering for coffee before moving through to the hall for their meal.



Andy and the kitchen team served up a tasty meal of 'bangers and mash' complete with vegetables and gravy. A lovely sponge pudding with cream (lots of it for Gill!) was enjoyed by everyone.

The next lunch is May 12th 12:30-2pm at a price of £5 (cash or card).

As Philip will be on Sabbatical throughout May, June, and July, please direct any bookings or cancellations for the Alton Methodist Lunch Club to Emily. She can be contacted on 07535 209537 or via email at annachaplainalton@gmail.com.

Thank you very much!



Blackwater Valley Circuit

The circuit leadership team have been busy planning for the staffing changes that are likely to take place in 2027 with the appointments of four ministers under review, with some moving on to enjoy retirement or a new appointment. The process within Methodism 'kicks in' during May this year, and over the summer formal conversations will be held with ministers about their future.

The finance team have been looking at assessments across the merged circuit and will bring their proposals to the June circuit meeting for consideration. This is the amount each church pays towards the running costs of the circuit and district.

The Blackwater Valley Circuit web site is now up and running and news about staff and circuit matters can be found there co/ <https://www.bwvcircuit.org>

Thankfully the Rev Anne Day (Aldershot and North Camp) has recovered from her hip operation and is back working in circuit.



Rev Kyung Mi's testimony service (before ordination in June) will be held at Frimley Green Methodist Church on Sunday 24th May at 6pm with the preacher being Rev Conrad Hicks (Chair of District).

Everyone is welcome to go along and make that a very special occasion – it's also Pentecost and Aldersgate Sunday!

**SOUTH EAST
METHODIST DISTRICT**



TESTIMONY SERVICE

REV'D KYUNG MI BANKS



6 PM, SUNDAY MAY 24TH

AT FRIMLEY GREEN METHODIST CHURCH

Camberley, GU16 6HF, on-street parking is available
for the limited church car park
Blackwater Valley Methodist Circuit

LED BY REV'D CONRAD HICKS (DISTRICT CHAIR)

**Methodist Conference and Worship
& Reception into Full Connexion**

9.45 am Sunday, June 28th 2026
Telford International Centre (Free ticket required),
available to livestream

Ordination Service

4 pm Sunday, June 28th 2026
Shrewsbury Abbey, Shrewsbury
Free ticket available, also available to livestream



**Naomi House
& Jacksplace**

hospices for children
and young adults

Thank you to all who attended the Good Friday concert by Alton Choral Society. Your generous donations raised £854 for Naomi House & Jacksplace.

Hospitality Fortnight will, I am sure have been a great success with some very kind hosts opening up their homes or booking venues to welcome people to share in a meal or refreshments. The proceeds of which will all go to our charity of the year. Thank you to everyone who has hosted or participated.

We look forward to future fundraising events over the coming weeks culminating in our gift day in July when 25% of the monies donated will go to the charity.



Ebony loves to visit Jacksplace where she enjoys socialising with friends and activities like cooking, safe in the knowledge that she will receive the specialist nursing care that she needs.

At just one year old, Thomas was diagnosed with a childhood cancer and a rare neurological condition. Thomas and his family were supported by Naomi House & Jacksplace, as he came to the end of his life.



News from the Parish of the Resurrection

We were very excited to hear that the PotR have appointed a new vicar – and it is the son-in-law of Chris Hinson!

Here is a copy of the welcome message from Tim & Karen to the Parish.



‘Karen and I are looking forward to moving to Alton on Thursday 16th July. My licensing will be on **Tuesday 11th August** at St Lawrence church, conducted by the Bishop of Winchester, The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen at 7pm, to which you are all invited.

Now, we would like to share a little something about ourselves as an introduction. Moving to Alton will be like a home coming for us both.

Karen grew up locally and has family here, whilst I grew up in Winchester, where I became a Christian. Karen and I married in Alton in 1990. We met at Moorland Bible college in Sopley.

I began my ministry as a youth worker for various churches and para-church organisations. I then felt called to ordination and trained at St John’s College in Nottingham. I have been ordained for 24 years.

Karen is a Licensed Lay Minister and we enjoy walking, exploring in our camper van, playing games and having family over. We have 3 grown children, a daughter-in-law and 2 grandchildren.

We have been ‘waiting well’, which were the words God spoke to us at the start of our discernment journey. It has been an informative process with God’s faithfulness evident in each step. We feel very blessed to be joining you and look forward to an exciting season of change, growth and moving forward together on the path God has set before us. Let us pray for each other as we settle in.

Every Blessing, Rev Tim Gomm’

Hospitality Fortnight



We had a great evening at Anna's, which was the first of our hospitality events being held. Anna was a wonderful host.

We enjoyed Cajun Chicken, Rice & Vegetables followed by Trifle & Coffee.

Please take a look on the notice board & book an event.

May Market

Saturday 9th May, 10am-12noon

Our spring fundraising event is fast approaching!

Please see if you could contribute anything to the stalls, but most of all—come along and join the fun!

- **Geraldine Mason** (01420 88726) will be running the plant stall and would welcome contributions of home-grown plants.



- **Terri White** (01420 617339) will be running the Bric-a-Brac stall with Anne Miller and would welcome donations of goods.

- **Liz Strain and Hannah Primrose** will be running the bookstall. Do look out those thrillers or holiday reads you've finished with. Please contact Liz on 07828 934200 if you need books collected in advance.



- **Sonja Williams** will be running the cake stall and would welcome contributions of home-baking.



Judy Nicholls and her team will be on hand to provide the ever-popular refreshments.

All rooms in the church will be in use the day before the fair so please do not leave goods here several days in advance. We will be setting up on the Friday evening from 9pm, after the Boy's Brigade Display. Goods may be brought then or from 9am on the Saturday. Alternatively, please contact me or the relevant stall-holder to arrange collection in advance.

Nancy Buck (01420 85994)

Church Family News

We remembered with fondness **Ruth Clements** at a thanksgiving service recently. She lived at Ladyplace Court and worshipped with us, then moved to Borovere Care Home.



We are pleased to learn that **Bob Wright** is moving to Marlfield and hope he enjoys being back in Alton and nearer for visitors.

Joy Wilson has had a spell in hospital following a fall and at the moment is in Belford House in Four Marks.

We send our love to all those who are living in care homes and sheltered accommodation as well as those waiting for appointments.

Prayers at Noon

Another month and time for God. **We meet on Tuesday 5th May** at twelve o'clock for just about fifteen minutes to offer prayers, spoken or silent. Do come and join us if you can.



Bible Study

The church Bible study will meet in May on **Tuesday 19th at 2pm** - there is always room for another one!

Singing our Faith

We meet again on **Tuesday 5th May at 2pm** to enjoy the words and music of some favourite hymns.



Ladies @ Wetherspoons

Why not come and join in the chat whilst having a coffee? We will be there **from 10am on Thursday 28th May.**



I can't believe another year has passed since I last started to empty the home collecting boxes. If you have one, there's time to feed it before passing it on to me! All those annoying coins which weigh you down will be put to good use by Action for Children in the valuable work they do. Thank you - Jennie Marlow

New Dishwasher!

Those of you who use the kitchen will have noticed the new dishwasher.

It is easy to use but one or two things to note!

- It takes 45 mins to heat up and will not start till it is ready.
- To start, please switch on at the wall and put the plug in the drain hole then press the left-hand button and it will begin to fill.
- When it is ready it will say so and you can press the right-hand button.
- Nothing must be put on the top of the machine, not even the baskets, Keep the top as dry as possible.

I will try to keep the salt topped up but it is kept in the locked cupboard under the machine if needed.

Christine Allan

News from 2nd Alton



Anchors

The boys have returned refreshed from our easter break.

We have now started practicing for the display evening when we get a chance to show everyone what we get up to on Friday evenings.

Glenda Bentley

Officer in charge of the Anchors

Company and Seniors

We enjoyed taking part in the BB National "Top Team" competition, but won't hear the results for several weeks. We're now preparing for the Display on 8th May, and then the Summer Programme will start. We'll be manning a Water Station for the Alton 10-mile Road Race, and then there's an outing to Basingstoke to for an evening of ten-pin bowling. Next will be games on The Butts, and before we know it, the May half-term break will be upon us!

David Allan

Captain

Everyone is invited to attend the 2nd Alton BB
DISPLAY EVENING
being held in the Church on Friday 8th May
starting at 7pm prompt

Girls' Brigade News



Before Easter our n:gage group wrapped up thinking about how we see God at work in Springtime, through the idea of new life, looking after creation and blossoming friendships.

During the Easter holidays we had a sleepover at the church (although it is questionable how much sleeping took place!). On day 1, some of our n:gage group completed a murder mystery around Alton. Following the directions given, we had to use signs, information posters and building names around the town to eliminate people from our list of suspects! I'm happy to report that the correct culprit was found so there may be a future in the police force for some of our girls!

After a few hours of sleep, we were joined by some more of our group and went for a great day out at Alice Holt. The girls enjoyed following signs for the 'Room on the Broom' trail, using the giant marble run and playing on the various climbing structures. We were fortunate to have great weather so we were in no rush to get back to the church. In the evening, we watched the 2015 live action Cinderella and spent a little while thinking about the themes of the film, courage, kindness and friendship.

As we start a new half term, the older girls are thinking about some big topics; democracy, fairness, and equality. Understanding that God made us all, we are all important and our differences can be what make us stronger.

As we look forward to the summer, we are starting to pull together our summer programme. If anyone has any skills or areas of interest they would like to share with us please let Amy know (amy.rebeca@gmail.com)



Our day out in Alice Holt Forest, following the 'Witch on the Broom' trail.



On the Murder Mystery walk in Alton

Our fourteen DofE Bronze participants have now chosen their campsites and planned their routes for their practice expeditions in the May half-term week, and are now making their final preparations for equipment and food.

At the recent East Hampshire DofE Presentation Evening in Bordon, ten of our participants were present to receive their Certificates, with two more unable to attend.



Our participants who received Certificates – 1 Bronze and 9 Silver

Two of our Year 7 Venturers enjoyed their accompanied training walk, and all three are now planning for their expedition.



Near Medstead



Studying the map

David Allan

CAMEO News

At our April meeting we enjoyed our second film session of the year, watching “Enchanted April” a light romantic film set in Italy in the 1920s. Thank you to Jacob for setting up the DVD so everything ran smoothly! Thanks also to Julie Davey who is now a regular part of the team.

At next month’s meeting on 16th May we will play host to our Town Mayor, Annette Eyre.

A reminder that everyone is invited to our **June meeting (20th June)** which will see the return of Rebecca and Claire to play and sing for us. All donations from this concert will go to Naomi House/Jacksplace, so do come along and bring your friends. We can promise a delightful afternoon of music, with tea and home-made cakes to follow the concert.

Judy Nicholls

Tuesday Coffee Donation

The latest donation from the Tuesday Ecumenical Coffee Morning was to the King’s Arms Project, a local youth charity with a centre in Alton, which offers a range of services and a safe space for young people to thrive - emotionally, mentally and physically.



Gillian Muller and Anita Mosson from the Parish of the Resurrection presented a cheque for £500 to Sarah Beechcroft (Centre Manager) Naomi Corlette (Youth Worker) and Lisa Hillan (Manager for Policies and Community Engagement) Also at the presentation was Norma Duke from Alton Methodist Church who nominated the charity. To find out more about the work of this local charity contact sarah@thekingsarms.org.uk.

Anna Chaplaincy



The Anna Chaplaincy team warmly invites older members of our community to a **May Day Tea on Wednesday 13th May 2026, from 2–4pm at Alton Methodist Church.** Enjoy a delightful afternoon filled with fête-style stalls and games, a singalong of well-loved British classics, creative

crafts, soothing hand massages, and a delicious afternoon tea—alongside plenty of fun and friendly conversation.

The team is also pleased to host a special “Holiday at Home” day on **Thursday 6th August 2026, from 10am–4pm at Alton Methodist Church.** This year’s theme, “By the Seaside,” brings the charm of a coastal getaway to you, with themed activities, crafts, entertainment, and food throughout the day, including a fish and chip lunch. It’s the perfect chance to enjoy a seaside ‘holiday’ without leaving town. To book your place, please call Emily on 07535 209537 or email annachaplinalton@gmail.com. We look forward to welcoming you!



Lunch Club

As Philip will be on sabbatical throughout May, June, and July, please direct any bookings or cancellations for the Alton Methodist Lunch Club to Emily. She can be contacted on 07535 209537 or via email at annachaplinalton@gmail.com. Thank you very much!

HARD OF HEARING GROUP

at

ALL SAINTS CHURCH HALL, ALTON



We were delighted to welcome to our April meeting Andrew Negus, our splendid local historian. The history of Portsmouth was stated as the subject matter.. However, I was somewhat bemused beforehand when I asked Andrew what aspect of the city’s history he would be telling us about. Andrew advised that he would be arriving at the meeting with ‘a car load of Portsmouth harlots and dung’ !! and there was me thinking HMS Victory, Mary Rose etc. It was a most fascinating talk I can assure you!

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 26th May at 2pm. Our speaker will be Peter King who describes himself as an ‘Unlikely Accountant [who cycles]!!’ So yet another enigma – I can only look forward with great interest to know what we will learn this time!

Our monthly meetings are geared to better allow those with a hearing impairment to meet and listen to talks and enjoy entertainment. We also of course run Lip Reading classes for those who wish to improve their ability to communicate with others.

Non- members would be very welcome [Entrance fee only £3 and you get tea and biscuits as well!] If you require any further information or indeed a Programme for 2026, please do not hesitate to contact

Annette Blackman (Tel 01420 543219 or E: ablackman4@googlemail.com)

Lip Reading - a very useful skill to help in difficult situations!

WHY NOT COME & GIVE IT A TRY!

The next meeting is in All Saints Church hall on **at 2pm Tuesday 5th May.**

All welcome!

For more information contact Kate 07811744843 (text only)

or Email: kaddando@gmail.com

Knitters Anonymous

Knitted with love



Another month and yet more 'thank-yous' to all our supporters ! To you knitters, and those who crochet, thank you for your time and skills in producing such varied and beautiful blankets and garments, and to those who donate such useful, colourful yarns. Did you know that a 500g ball of wool produced a 23x23inch baby blanket, 14 pairs of comforters and 14 flap hats? A regular knitter told us that she had made 67 adult size hats last year using only donated wool and Judith continues to make her delightful toy teddy bears using smaller unwanted balls of wool! Everything is used and valued. THANK YOU ALL!

Our next meeting is in **All Saints Church Hall on Tuesday 19th May 2pm until 3.30pm**. Why not come along, see what we do and have a chat over a cup of tea? You will be made most welcome! Donations can be brought along to these meetings or can be left in the box in All Saints Church.

For more info contact Kate 07811744843 (text only) or kaddan-do@gmail.com



Alton Open Sight is a social club for those with a visual impairment. It meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at All Saints Church Hall at 2.30pm. **The next meeting will be held on 18th May** when our visiting speaker will be Ben Hamlin from The Woodland Trust.

The meetings provide an opportunity to make new friends over an afternoon tea, with a chance to share information on coping with sight loss.

We welcome anyone with a visual impairment. If you are interested please either email Sue at AltonOpenSight@gmail.com or contact Open Sight via their website <https://opensight.org.uk> or telephone 02380 641244, during office hours.

Fresh Start

LIFE-CONTROLLING HABIT?
SMOKING
GAMBLING
SHOPPING
OVER-EATING
DRINKING
SOCIAL MEDIA
ETC...

Support to help you discover freedom.

Join a friendly group and learn the skills you need to change your habits for good.

Book your free place by contacting Mark Rumsby on 07769 030913 or email: freshstart@harvestchurch.uk.

Dates for your Diary

MAY

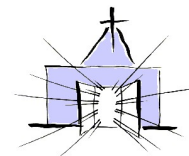
Tues 5	12.00 noon 2.00pm	Prayers at Noon Singing our Faith
Fri 8	7.00pm	Boys' Brigade Display
Sat 9	10.00-12.00	May Market
Tues 12	12.30pm	Lunch Club
Wed 13	2.00-4.00pm	Anna Chaplaincy May Day Tea
Sat 16	2.00pm	CAMEO
Tues 19	2.00pm	Church Bible Study Group
Sun 24	6.00pm	Rev Kyung Mi Banks Testimony Service at
Thurs 28	10.00am →	Ladies @ Wetherspoons

JUNE

Tues 2	7.30pm	Family Committee meeting
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Please look at articles in the Newsletter giving more information.

The June issue of the Newsletter should be available from Sunday 31st May.



Services in May 2026

Sunday 3rd	5th Sunday of Easter
	10.00am Rev Bruce Nicole
Sunday 10th	6th Sunday of Easter
	10.00am Jennie Marlow
Sunday 17th	7th Sunday of Easter
	10.00am Revd David Wilson - Holy Communion
Sunday 24th	Pentecost
	10.00am Liz George
Sunday 31st	Trinity Sunday
	<u>10.30am</u> <u>GAP Service at St Lawrence</u> with Bishop Philip Mounstephen

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 during Philip's sabbatical, please contact Mrs Liz George via the church email address (above) or Tel 01420 88721.

For bookings, please contact Mrs Liz Strain via the church email address (above) or Tel 07828 934200.

Anna Chaplain: Mrs Emily Spencer.
Tel: 07535 209537 Email: annachaplainalton@gmail.com

Items for inclusion in the **June** issue of the "**Newsletter**" should reach the editor, Nancy Buck, by noon **Sunday 24th May**.