

Services in September 2026

Sunday 6th	23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time 10.00am Mrs Liz George
Sunday 13th	24th Sunday in Ordinary Time 10.00am Rev David Wilson – Holy Communion
Sunday 20th	25th Sunday in Ordinary Time 10.00am Rev Christine Parker 4.00pm Circuit Farewell Service for Philip
Sunday 27th	Harvest Festival 10.00am The Stewards

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 the interregnum, please contact Mrs Liz George via the church email address (above) or Tel 07703 648935.

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

Anna Chaplain: Mrs Emily Spencer

Tel: 07535 2098537 Email: annachaplainalton@gmail.com

Items for inclusion in the October issue of the “Newsletter” should reach the editor, Nancy Buck, by noon **Sunday 20th September**.

Alton Methodist Church

NEWSLETTER

September 2026



Lay Minister: Mrs. Liz George

Tel: 07703 648935

Church website: www.altonmethodist.org.uk

Circuit website: bvmcircuit.org



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



Dear Friends,

We write to thank you for your kind words, support, encouragement and generosity as Angela, and I say farewell and move on to a new chapter in our lives and ministry after nine years in post – the longest we have lived anywhere in our married life!

We have loved living in Alton and sharing in the fellowship of the church, being really blessed through the worship shared, the conversations enjoyed, and the friendships made.

Looking back, we have been through many joys and sorrows together – sharing the good times and the sad times, including the challenge that Covid brought to our lives and to the church. The sense of isolation, the anxiety and for some the grief of losing loved ones. I never dreamt that along with Liz we would be trying to work out how to do online services, learning new technology and trying to film services in Chawton Wood, the harvest fields at sunrise and even in my greenhouse on one occasion!

We have also enjoyed and been enriched through being a part of the many activities at church – house group, stewards' meetings, Boys & Girls Brigade, coffee mornings, church fayres, lunch club and of course weekly worship. Thank you for the many ways in which you have served the life of the church and the way in which you care for the church family.

My interest in hospital chaplaincy began in my last appointment when I served as a part-time hospital chaplain for five years (two days a week) alongside church ministry in Keynsham. For the last eight years I have also been an 'honorary' and then 'bank chaplain' at Hampshire Hospitals, often covering 'on call' shifts overnight when needed, usually attending end of life situations. Whilst challenging, I have also

Dates for your Diary

SEPTEMBER

Tues 1	12 noon	Prayers at Noon
Mon 7	7.30pm	'Godspace' at Holy Rood Church
Tues 8	12.30pm	Lunch Club
Sun 11	12.30pm	Harvest & Harmony at Old Park Farm
Sat 19	2.00pm	CAMEO
Sun 20	4.00pm	Circuit Service of farewell to Philip & Angela
Tues 22	10.00-12.00	Macmillan Coffee Morning at Holy Rood Church, Holybourne
Thurs 24	10.00-12.00	Ladies @ Wetherspoons
Fri 25	12.00	Funeral of Marian Cresswell

OCTOBER

Fri 2	10.00-12.00	Macmillan Coffee Morning here
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Please look at articles in the Newsletter for more information.

The October issue of the Newsletter should be available from Sunday 27th September.



Alton Choral Society

Sing With Us!

ACS is a friendly choir welcoming singers of all abilities and voice types.

We perform regularly and raise much needed funds for local charities

Singing in a choir is also proven to improve health & wellbeing

We perform a broad range of music from Bach, Fauré, Gilbert & Sullivan to Popular Musicals

Rehearsals take place on Wednesday evenings from 7.45pm in The Salvation Army Hall in The Market Square Alton

For more information please contact us:

Email: welcome@altonchoral.org.uk

Visit our website: www.altonchoral.org.uk

Call: 07715 771489



felt it to be a privilege to minister alongside people of all faiths or none in a time of crisis, sadness or loss.

As many of you know, we were due to move next summer, however it is during June, July & August of this current year that a minister has to decide their next steps – to go into stationing for a new church post (in my case for just two years), to retire, or maybe...

Having spent the early part of my sabbatical fully intending to retire next year whilst praying that if God had other plans that he might show me, it just seemed an amazing God-incidence when the opportunity arose to apply for a chaplaincy post at St Mary's Hospital Newport, IOW, the day after I had formally given in my notice to the circuit. It was an opportunity that I felt compelled to explore, sensing that this just may have God's hand upon it. And so, with the permission of the Methodist Church, the support of the superintendent and the chair of district and an interview at St Mary's I was offered the post, beginning on September 1st. The hospital is just down the road from our house on the island and will also allow me to support the local Methodist Circuit in due course, if required!

The decision was not taken lightly, recognising the extra work moving early puts onto members of the church and circuit. We so appreciate the willingness of Liz George to be approached by the superintendent to once more be the lay minister at Alton, having served so ably in a previous interregnum. We are also very grateful to Rev David Wilson for being able to offer regular services with Holy Communion, and the stewards for seeking to ensure that the life of the church continues to run smoothly, preparing and leading some excellent 'local arrangements'. We pray that a new minister will be appointed for September 2027.

And so as we go, we wish you God's blessing – Philip & Angela

The Lord bless you and keep you:

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.

Words seem so inadequate to express our thanks for all that Philip and Angela have done over the last 9 years in Alton and the wider Circuit. We are certainly going to miss them, but I know we all wish them God's richest blessing and happiness in their ministry and home on the Isle of White.

As Philip has mentioned, after discussion with the Superintendent and Alton Stewards, I will have the role of Lay Minister during this year of interregnum. This is a role which I last undertook in 2016-2017 before Philip was appointed. "Lay" refers to all of us who are not ordained!

When Philip was appointed, I was asked what role I would play, and I said "backstop" meaning I would catch anything Philip chose to throw in my direction! Philip has been most generous in sharing ministry with myself and others in a very humble and collegiate way and I for one have learnt a lot from him. I'm sure you will agree that it has been both a pleasure and a privilege to have Angela and Philip with us and to serve alongside them.

The remit of my role is "to lead worship at Alton, as required, and to work with the Stewards, and committees of the church to have oversight of pastoral care and ensure a continuing healthy development of the whole of church life at Alton Methodist Church." As Superintendent Minister, Rev Nick Oborski has ultimate responsibility for all churches in the Blackwater Valley Circuit and I will work closely with Nick.

Interregnum can be a time of uncertainty, but I feel certain that we will all pull together to look after each other and to continue to reach out to show God's love to the community of Alton. Please continue to pray for God's help in this. If you have any thoughts, ideas, concerns or pastoral needs in the coming year please don't hesitate to contact myself, Jennie Marlow our Pastoral Leader, Emily Spencer our Anna Chaplain, or one of the Stewards. We are all available to help.

Liz George



On Tuesday **22nd September 2026**

Tuesday Coffee at Holy Rood Church will be raising money for **Macmillan**

There will be a cuppa and a piece of delicious home baked cake with your name on it.

So why not come along and join us in raising funds for

Macmillan Cancer Support

at Holy Rood Church Holybourne

on Tuesday 22nd September from 10.00 - 12.00

We will look forward to welcoming you

We will finish with a short time of prayer at 11.45



FREE COURSE IN ALTON HELPS PEOPLE TO KICK BAD HABITS

Harvest Church in Alton is offering free, non-judgmental support to local people so that they can overcome damaging habits and start again - through a course called **Fresh Start**.

That might be something like **smoking, over-eating, catalogue shopping, internet or mobile phone addiction, gambling, drinking or using drugs** – in fact any habit which once might **have** brought us comfort or fun, but is now controlling or spoiling our daily living.

Fresh Start is for anyone who feels that it's time to cut down or stop. This is so hard to do on your own, so the course leaders support you in a small group setting where everyone is fighting similar situations and can encourage one another in a confidential environment. They also offer one-to-one coaching.

This free course is inspired by the tried-and-tested 12-steps approach, and lasts nine weeks. It has run 21 times in the Alton area. Many group members find a place to belong and make lasting friendships. For more detail, see <https://harvestchurch.uk/fresh-start>

After previous local courses, a man tackling an internet addiction said: "I'd like to thank you...for putting on the Fresh Start course and helping me achieve my goals...I am very grateful for the work you did with us." Another, tackling a gambling addiction, said: "It's the best thing I ever did. It saved my marriage. It saved my children from probably leaving me with my wife; it saved me from me. Without this course, I would never have been where I am today: I would probably have been in a worse hole, or even dead." A woman now in recovery from alcohol addiction said: "I wouldn't be where I am today, if I hadn't come on Fresh Start".

The next course will start on **Thursday 1st October, 10:30am at Alton Maltings**. So, if you, or anyone you know, needs a fresh start, register for the course by calling Mark on 07769 030913 or email freshstart@harvestchurch.uk.



Jennie Marlow will be organising our own **Macmillan Coffee Morning on Friday 2nd October**, 10am to 12 noon in the church foyer.

The Smile Train

The stewards have chosen The Smile Train as our international charity, for the church to support during this next year, starting in September.

Smile Train fund 100% free cleft treatment to children and adults with clefts in 75+ countries through their network of local medical professionals. It is the world's largest cleft-focused organisation, with a sustainable and local model of supporting life-changing surgery and other essential care to those in need, 365 days a year.

Their unrivalled "teach a man to fish" model focuses on training local professionals to provide a continuum of world-class cleft care in their own communities. Those trained go on to train their peers, thereby creating a sustainable system for ongoing cleft care.

For most children with clefts, surgery alone is not enough and that's why Smile Train also sponsor nutritional support, dental care, orthodontic treatment, speech therapy, and other essential comprehensive services that free their patients to not only smile but thrive.

We look forward to welcoming Bronwen Maggs, The Smile Train Legacy Manager to come to speak to us about the Smile Train one Sunday in October.

Anna Mitchell

Farewell Service

On Sunday 20th September at 4.00pm there will be a Blackwater Valley Circuit service at Alton Methodist Church to officially say "Thank you and Farewell" to Rev Philip and Angela Simpkins.

All are welcome

Dear Anna and all at Alton Methodist Church,

Thank you sincerely for choosing Smile Train
as your international charity of the year!

We are so grateful for your support...

Your donations will help us to provide life-saving
treatment for children in need all over the world
and ensure that our partners can provide the care
every child needs to grow, belong, and thrive.

With warm wishes,

Bronwen and everyone at Smile Train UK

Gift Day and our donation to Naomi & Jack's

For the past year we have been supporting Naomi House & Jack'splace (now rebranded as Naomi & Jack's). This collection was boosted by allocating 25% of the Gift Day donations to this charity.

I am pleased to say that total Gift Day donations came to a very generous £9,308. With Gift Aid added this will be worth £11,131.

Our fundraising total for Naomi House is £5,785 – which we have round up to £5,800.

Graham Titterington

GODSPACE

AT HOLY ROOD CHURCH, HOLYBOURNE

**COME AND EXPERIENCE PEACE
THROUGH REFLECTION AND MUSIC**

**7.30PM MONDAY 7TH
SEPTEMBER**

EVERYONE WELCOME



contacts to the Ukraine. Any suggestions as to other charity contacts that in the meantime could benefit from your labours would be most welcome. Thank you for continuing to keep your donations, we will keep you up to date.

BLISS – supporting babies born prematurely or sick - however is appealing to restock their shelves ready for the Autumn/Christmas deliveries. Items required include blankets, cardis, hats (flap or the standard ones) bonding squares, Christmas Stockings, Paws in Pocket bears, in fact any of their usual knits; choose whichever are your favourite to make. A few dos and don'ts – no lacey blankets with holes as tiny fingers can get trapped, no yarn with glittery metallic fibres, don't wash any clothing or blankets, it all goes into the laundry skip at the Baby Units and is washed there and don't iron anything as this flattens the fibres and reduces the warmth.

The next meeting of the group is in **All Saints Church Hall on Tuesday 15th September from 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!

For more info contact Kate on 07811744843 (text only) or email:kaddando@gmail.com

The Forget-me-not Service

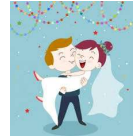
This annual event, held in mid-August in All Saints Church, was sensitively led by Revd Wendy Burnhams and was followed by a lively social occasion organised by volunteers over tea and cakes in All Saints Church Hall.

This photograph shows the decorations on the chancel rails that were made by members of the Alton Dementia Friendly Group. The Forget-me-not mementos distributed to the congregation were made by the Monday morning crochet group.



Church Family News

Congratulations to David and Frances Wilson who celebrated their Golden Anniversary recently and **also to Stuart and Jo Hunter** who enjoyed their Diamond Anniversary in July.



Janet Meager reaches her 90th birthday on 27th September - well done!

Two friends of our church have died recently.

Eileen Pike who moved from Cloverleaf Court to Romsey to be nearer to family **and Marian Cresswell** who has been in Brendoncare.



Marian has been such a blessing with the garden coffee mornings she and John hosted for charity both at their home in Will Hall Close and previously in Froyle. **Her funeral will be on Friday 25th September, 12 noon in church.**

Eileen, in earlier days was a regular helper on the Fancy Goods stall at church fairs, amongst other activities. We send our love and prayers to all who will miss these two lovely ladies. God is with us in the happy times and the sad ones.

Prayers at Noon

This short time of prayer happens on the first Tuesday of the month at twelve o'clock, so it's appropriate that on **1st September** we gather at the beginning of the Methodist year. We will want to pray for our church, in particular at this time, to ask God's blessing on the way ahead. Come and share your prayers, either said or silent.



Ladies @Wetherspoons

We will be meeting again on **Thursday 24th September** any time from 10 am until 12. Pop in for a coffee and chat - there is plenty of room.



Harvest Festival

Our Harvest Festival will take place on **Sunday 27th September**, and as we focus on God's goodness, we also recognise the needs of many in our community. **You are invited to bring a contribution of non-perishable items for Alton Foodbank.** They are currently short of:- long-life milk, fruit juice, washing powder, biscuits, coffee. Any other non-perishable goods would of course be very welcome.

We will not be holding a harvest lunch at Alton Methodist Church as we are all invited to join with the Resurrection Benefice for:



Harvest & Harmony

SUNDAY 11TH OCTOBER 12.30PM

at OLD PARK FARM BEECH GU34 4AP

Traditional Harvest 2 course lunch and pudding £5.00

Please sign up by email or call Sarah to confirm attendance:
sarahneish65@gmail.com
07761 933031

A BENEFICE & GAP EVENT

On September 22nd we will have a Harvest Service in All Saints Church. It will start at 2pm and will be led by our Anna Chaplain, Emily Spencer. After the short service tea and biscuits will be served. Any donations of tins of food etc will be passed to the Alton Food Bank for distribution.

Please note that everyone is welcome to attend this Harvest event – it is not specifically for those who come to the Hard of Hearing meetings!

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.

If you require any further information or indeed a Programme for the rest of 2026, please do not hesitate to contact Annette Blackman on 01420 543219 or email: ablackman4@googlemail.com



Lip Reading

It is hard work trying to listen when you have a hearing loss. Come along to meet others with similar difficulties and share some tips and advice.

Meetings are monthly with a qualified Tutor. The new term starts on Tuesday 1st September at 2pm in All Saints Church Hall, Queens Road.

You will be made most welcome!

For more information contact Kate on 0781 1744843 (text only) or email: kaddando@gmail.com

Knitters Anonymous



Many thanks to so many of you who have still been managing to knit for our charities despite this very hot weather, and to Anne who is still storing the results of your labours for us, while we are waiting for positive information on the resuming of our

the England v Norway match, and the Scouts had set up a huge screen for them to watch! Both days were extremely hot, and they were pleased to arrive at their destination near Bramley.



Watching the match



In the shade at the finish

The second group travelled from Holmbury St Mary to beyond Box Hill, with an overnight in a beautiful woodland campsite at Ranmore, above Dorking.

Everyone has now to finish the remaining sections of their Award – Volunteering, an Interest and a Skill.

David Allan

Hard of Hearing Group

at

All Saints Church Hall, Alton – 2pm

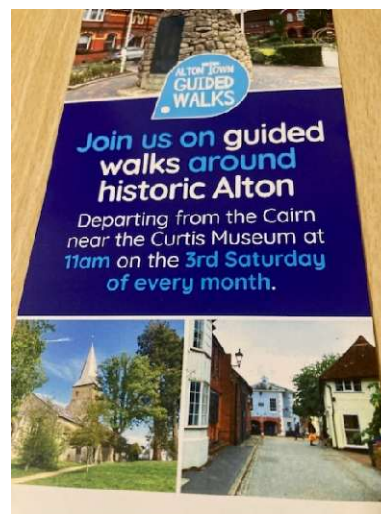


At our meeting in July we were delighted to welcome Stan Wicher, the former Alton Town Crier. On one of the many really hot days of this summer he spoke to us about 'Opportunity'. It was thought provoking but possibly most members were tuned in to opportunities to keep cool. Nevertheless – many thanks to Stan who brought his 'bell' with him to ensure we paid attention!

In August we did not have a meeting after all- we took a break!

CAMEO NEWS

Anna Mitchell was due to share her experience of working with "Fresh Start" at our August meeting but, sadly, had to withdraw because of illness.



A last-minute replacement had to be found, so Judy decided to take members on an imaginary walk around Alton, using her Town Guides' script. Long- time residents were able to contribute their own local knowledge while the recent arrivals learned more about their new home. Two of them have even signed up for the September walk! After our exploration of Alton we were more than ready to enjoy tea and delicious cakes, kindly baked and donated by Sue Baylis.

Our next meeting is on 19th September when we hope Anna will be fully recovered and able to deliver her planned talk.

Judy Nicholls

Ink Cartridge Recycling

The latest batch of ink cartridges sent for recycling will generate a donation of £20.45 to the Anna Chaplaincy Fund.

Thank you for continuing to deposit your used ink-jet cartridges in the collection box in the Church foyer.



Anna Chaplaincy Update

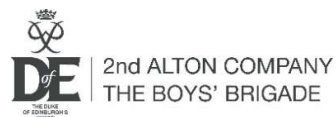
Greetings from the Anna Chaplaincy Team!

We are delighted to share that we had a wonderfully successful seaside 'Holiday at Home' event in August, welcoming more than 50 older members of our community, along with carers and family members.

We began the day with tea, cake and a warm welcome, while seaside songs played in the background and everyone had the chance to catch up. We soon got our competitive sides out with a Seaside Quiz and Beach Bingo, with some fantastic seaside-themed prizes up for grabs!



We were then serenaded by the fabulous Ukulele 4, who entertained us beautifully and got us ready for our traditional fish and chip lunch.



Our Bronze groups have been busy since the last Newsletter article. We've had two practice expeditions (14 participants) in the local area at the end of May, one group camping by the River Wey near Dockenfield, the other at the Rural Life Museum near Frensham.



1. Crossing the railway line at Bentley



In camp at Dockenfield



2. Starting on Hankley Common



Finishing at the Shepherd and Flock

Then, having successfully demonstrated that they were competent (-ish!), they tackled their assessed expeditions in the Surrey Hills in the hot weather at the beginning of July.

The first group started from near Newlands Corner, and after quite a bit of meandering finally arrived at their Scout campsite. This was the night of

and offers a wide range of activities. No doubt next month's newsletter will tell you more about their experiences . . .

David Allan
Captain



On the walk to Alton



Top Golf

Girls' Brigade News



We are looking forward to meeting again from Monday 7th September. N:vestigate girls (4½-8) meet at 6pm and older girls start at 6.30pm.

Girls' Brigade is a uniformed, Christian organisation. At Alton Methodist Church we aim to have fun through games, handcraft, singing, dance, skipping, etc., but also to learn more about the bible and develop useful life skills.

New members are always welcome. If you know a girl who might like to join us, please contact Amy Evans via the church email address or phone 07818 623405 for further information or see the church website. Alternatively you can talk to Nancy Buck, Glenda Bentley or Gill Thorne at church or just turn up on a Monday evening to give it a try.

After enjoying our seaside feast, we got creative with Becky, making a range of seaside-themed crafts to take home.



Next came the sandcastle competition! Each table was challenged to create their own seaside scene using a tray of kinetic sand, with prizes awarded for the most creative creations.

By this point, things were getting rather warm in the church, so it was the perfect time for ice cream! Everyone enjoyed theirs with flakes, sprinkles and sauce while watching an episode of *Fawlty Towers* – and there was certainly plenty of laughter!



glow-in-the-dark sea turtles!

We rounded off the day with a seaside singalong, led by Ian on the piano. We sang some much-loved seaside favourites before everyone headed home with a special goody bag filled with familiar seaside treasures, including a stick of rock, shells and even

It was a wonderful day filled with laughter, friendship, creativity and happy memories, and it was a joy to see so many people enjoying themselves.

A huge thank you to everyone who attended, helped and supported the event. Your enthusiasm and generosity helped make our seaside 'Holiday at Home' such a memorable day!



The Anna Chaplaincy Team are here to support all older members of our community, offering spiritual and emotional care, regardless of faith background. If you or someone you know feels they would benefit from this support, please contact Emily on 07535 209537 or email her at annachaplainalton@gmail.com.

With very best wishes,

Emily and the Team

Lunch Club

Any bookings or cancellations for Alton Methodist Church lunch club (next lunch on **Tuesday 8th September**) are now to be made to Emily on 07535 209537 or email: annachaplainalton@gmail.com.

Lunch club runs on the second Tuesday of the month at 12.30pm. The suggested donation is £5 for a 2-course meal, including tea and coffee.

2nd Alton News



All Sections resume on **Friday 11th September**, at their usual times. On the previous Friday, 4th September, the Staff will be meeting to plan the programme and address the staffing arrangements for the coming session. We're pleased that Hannah Ward will be joining us as a new leader – she will no doubt be a great help.

Anchors

We must record our grateful thanks to Norma Duke, who has been a huge support to Glenda in running Anchors, and who stepped down at the end of the summer session. The good news is that Glenda's daughter Libby has finished University in Aberystwyth and will be able to help with BB once again.

Juniors

We were very sorry to learn that Beth Henze, who stepped in to lead our Juniors at the beginning of the year, is unable to continue in this role, due to work pressure and family commitments. She has been a great help and inspiration to the Boys, and we'll all miss her.

Abbie White, who has been helping her as a Young Leader, is off to University, and so she won't be able to continue in that role. So, needless to say, we're urgently looking for adult assistance to keep Juniors running smoothly over coming weeks and months.

Company and Seniors

Since the last newsletter, the older Boys have had a busy few months, with outings to Coral Reef leisure pool, a challenging session in an 18th Century apothecary's study in the Escape Rooms, games on The Butts, Top Golf, cycling on Frensham Common and a walk from Avenue Nurseries to a barbecue back in Alton.

As this goes to press, our Boys are on camp in Wales with others from the BB Companies in Fleet and Woodley. It's a site we have used in the past