

Alton Methodist Church

NEWSLETTER

November 2025



kirstypargeter, Getty Images

*There is a time for every-
thing, and a season for every
activity under heaven:*

*A time for war and a time for
peace.*

[Ecclesiastes 3:1,8]

Remembrance Sunday

9th November



Minister: Rev. Philip Simpkins

Tel: 01420 83167

Church website www.altonmethodist.org.uk

Circuit website www.hsbccircuit.org.uk



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



Dear Friends,

I enjoy growing pumpkins on the allotment. They do however require lots of space to sprawl across the ground. They also like a long hot growing season for the fruits to grow to a good size and ripen fully. As summer turns towards autumn the joy comes in seeing the foliage die back leaving one or two large balls of orange fruit to pick before the first frosts and store for winter.



Traditionally adults and children have enjoyed gouging out the middles and carving scary faces onto pumpkins as part of their Halloween decorations. These scary candle-lit faces (which used to be carved from turnips) are supposed to ward off evil spirits, ghosts, ghoulies and all those things that go

bump in the night - according to the ancient Celtic festival, *Samhain*, as summer finally gives way to the dark nights of winter. It is also known as Halloween (All Hallows Eve) – the night before All Saints Day.

All Saints Day really does give us a reason to remember and celebrate those many saints of old, both known and unknown, who have been a blessing to others throughout their lives. Courageous and faithful Christians like St. Peter and St. Paul who gave their lives following Jesus and sharing their faith in word and deed. Inspirational believers like St Francis of Assisi who renounced his wealth and chose to live a life of simplicity, serving the poor, writing poems and communing with nature. Also gifted theologians like St. Thomas Aquinas who shaped Christian thinking on faith, reason and the nature of God.

*For all the saints who showed your love,
In how they lived and where they moved,
For mindful women, caring men,
Accept our gratitude again.*

(Singing the Faith 746 John Bell & Graham Maule)

All Saints Day (Nov 1st) and All Souls Day (Nov 2nd) give us opportunity to commemorate **all** the faithfully departed. To pause and remember on a personal note, those we have loved and shared life with us and to quietly give thanks for the privilege and joy of their company.

As Christians, celebrating All Saints Day and All Souls Day, also reminds us of the hope we have through faith in Christ of the resurrection to eternal life.



*Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be
uninformed about those who sleep in death, so
that you do not grieve like the rest of humankind,
who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died
and rose again, and so we believe that God will
bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in
him... and so we will be with the Lord for ever. (1
Thessalonians 4.13-14 & 17)*

On **Sunday November 2nd at 4pm** we will offer a special reflective service entitled '**Candles of Remembrance**' whereby through music, prayers, poems, a prayer tree to add the name of your loved one and the lighting of candles we make space to remember and give thanks for all those who we remember and love whether recent or long ago.

Every blessing

Philip

Candles of Remembrance Service **Sunday November 2nd at 4pm** **Alton Methodist Church**

We warmly invite you and any members of your family or friends to attend our Candles of Remembrance Service whereby we offer space and time to come and reflect on the lives of people we have loved and lost, whether recently or some time ago.

This reflective service will contain music/ hymns, readings, poems and an opportunity to light a candle of remembrance. It will last about 30-40mins. followed by refreshments.

If you would like to come and have a particular poem or wish to suggest a piece of music which would be suitable for all, please do contact us by 26th October and we will try and include it if able.

We look forward to welcoming you, and hope that a quiet place of reflection would be helpful.

Rev Philip Simpkins & Mrs Liz George altonmethodist@hotmail.com
01420-83167



Lunch Club

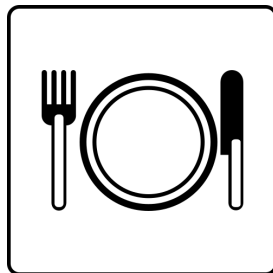
I am sure that many of you enjoyed a wonderful meal at the lunch club held in the church during October. It is always great to welcome new members and friends!

The lunch club next meets on Tuesday 11th November between 12:30 and 2pm, with a two-course meal, price £5.

There will also be an opportunity to drop a little extra 'tip' into a collecting bowl so that we are able to give a token gift to our superb cooks and their team at the Christmas lunch.

The Christmas meal followed by some carols and readings/poems will be held on **Tuesday Dec 9th** and it is *essential* that you let us know if you intend to come beforehand. We have a maximum capacity of sixty people including helpers – so we will ask you to ensure that you have booked to avoid disappointment!

To book/cancel or amend please contact Philip on 01420-83167



Stay and Play

**At Alton Methodist Church
Wednesdays 10am to 11:30am**

Adults with Children 0-4yrs



Parents, carers and children greatly enjoy coming to Stay and Play where they will find a warm welcome and lots of toddler toys to play with.

During October we have averaged 35 children and 20 adults which makes the church sanctuary a hubbub of activity and chatter!

Many thanks to Liz G, Liz S. and Angela for providing the opportunity for everyone to meet, enjoy one another's company and to offer a listening ear... as well as clear up afterwards!



As our charity for the year, we were very grateful to Alison and Graham Noakes for hosting our quiz evening during October which raised in the region of £300.

The quiz had variety and something for everyone – including 'Cows will walk down steps but never up steps!' (true or false?). Having watched cows step up into the milking parlour many times (and on one occasion receiving a 'pat on the head' as I stood below) I did know the answer to this one!



It is of course the 'taking part that matters' – when you don't win that is!

However, the winning team (below) were well deserving of acclaim demonstrating a vast array of general knowledge!

We were very grateful to Christine, Liz and all who helped produce a lovely meal halfway through the proceedings.

We look forward to further fund-raising opportunities over the coming year.



Naomi House & Jacksplace supports children, young adults and their families from across central southern England. Here is one story about the work that they do.



In 2021, when he was just one year old, Thomas was diagnosed with a childhood cancer and a rare neurological condition. Thomas and his family were cared for by Naomi House & Jacksplace, as Thomas came to the end of his life.

Before his disease, we knew Thomas as a very happy little boy who would laugh when others were laughing, even if he didn't understand what they were laughing about. He loved to

play with balls, and join in with his older brother and sister, Raphaël and Sofia, if they were playing with bricks or reading a story. Thomas started to show strange behaviours when he was around 11 months old. It was quite difficult to know whether anything was wrong or whether it was just part of his development. A few days after his first birthday, real symptoms appeared. He started to have uncontrollable movement of his eyes and problems with his coordination and balance. The hospital did lots of tests and we were told that Thomas had a tumour mostly affecting young children.

Our community nurse kept saying how wonderful Naomi House & Jacksplace was, so we arranged to go for a visit before we made up our minds. Thomas and his family were cared for until eventually he died.

Everyone at Naomi House has been so kind. The doctors and nurses answered all our questions with gentle voices, they always had the right words to say and nothing was a problem for them.

(abridged version - used kind permission from Naomi House & Jacksplace)

Christmas Fair at Alton Methodist Church

Saturday 29th November, 10 am-12 noon

Don't miss our Christmas Fair on Saturday 29th November! The following selection of stalls are planned and donations of goods to sell would be welcome:-

Cakes	Sonja Williams
Fancy Goods/Bric-a-brac	Terri White
Toys	Jennie Marlow
Baskets	Christine Allan
Jar Tombola	BB & GB



In addition, **Judy Nicholls and her team in the Café** will be there to refresh all weary shoppers and **the BB will be running a Games Zone in the hall.**

The Brigades have collected enough jars for their tombola and would appreciate donations of items to fill them. Please see Glenda, Nancy or Gill Thorne on a Sunday morning.

Christine Allan would appreciate some more baskets and items to fill them. Also, would someone like to make sweets/crackers etc to fill up the stall? Christine is happy to help with attractive packaging.

We have space for another stall – any bright ideas?

Please bring items for sale on Friday 28th November from 9.30pm to 10.00pm (after Boys' Brigade) **or on Saturday 29th November from 9.00am to 10.00am.** If you would like to have items collected in advance, please contact the stall holder or Nancy.

Volunteers to help with stalls or clearing up afterwards would be much appreciated.

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

Nancy Buck (01420 85994)

CAMEO NEWS

To celebrate her 50th birthday CAMEO member Margaret Hodson achieved a long-held ambition to visit Nepal on a trekking holiday. At our September meeting she shared memories of that trek, together with amazing photographs. We were fascinated and impressed in equal measure! What an achievement Margaret.



Margaret Hodson shares memories of her Nepal trek

In October one of our church members, Anne Miller, gave a fascinating insight into some of her experiences on solo pilgrimages, including those on the famous Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage route. Her excellent talk was illustrated with images of her travels, put together by her husband, Paul. Thank you to both Anne and Paul for a very enjoyable afternoon. Grateful thanks also to Angela who stepped in to take charge of the refreshments when Judy was out of commission with Covid.

Our next meeting on 15th November will be our annual Christmas Shopping Afternoon, when a variety of small gifts will be available, courtesy of the charity HomeStart. There will, of course, be tea and cakes available as usual.

Janet, Judy & Anna.

Church Family News

We want to celebrate with Doris Mearles who has a very special birthday on 16th of this month. Doris has been a member of this church for many years and is still active in collecting the money at the monthly church lunch. Happy Birthday Doris!

This month we particularly think of those we have loved and lost with a special service on Sunday 2nd November at 4pm. We especially think of our friends who have been bereaved in recent months and send them our love



Prayers at Noon

The prayer group meets again **on Tuesday 4th November** for just a short time of prayer and meditation. Why not come along at midday?

Singing our Faith

This group will be meeting to share in some hymn singing - anyone is welcome. We start at **2pm on Tuesday 4th** and then quench our thirst with a cup of tea.



Church Bible Study

On Tuesday 18th the Bible Study meets at church at 2pm to share some further thoughts on the subject of gratitude - do come along.

Ladies @ Wetherspoons

We will be getting together on **Thursday 27th November between 10 and 12**. No doubt we will comment that when we meet again Christmas will be over! Do come and enjoy a cup of coffee and a chat.



Jennie Marlow

Donation from Tuesday Coffee Mornings

The most recent donation to the local charity Dementia Friendly Alton came from the coffee morning held every Tuesday at Alton Methodist Church.



Joan Longhurst and Angie Briggs presented the cheque for £1000 to a delighted Karen Murrell, chair of trustees, who confirmed that every penny will be put towards funding the comprehensive Monday to Friday programme at Alton Assembly Rooms. She urged everyone to pop in between 10am and 4pm to find out more.



Dear Friends Thank you all for the cards and flowers that you have given me over the summer. All your kind thoughts really boosted my recovery. I am now well and truly repaired and send love to you all, **Delia Thomas xx**

Nora Turner would like to thank Church members for cards, calls and support received recently .



2nd Alton Company



We were encouraged by the support of the congregation as we met together for our annual Enrolment Service. Despite the forecast of rain, we were able to march from The Butts in the dry, led by our band. We appreciated the Service led by Liz George, focusing on Jesus's parable of the unjust judge.

Anchors

Since we returned in September the boys have enjoyed a dinosaur night and some forest fun and a visit from Speedy the tortoise. We also had a visit from David Betts when our friends from Girls' Brigade joined us to learn about team work .



Forest fun

What will Speedy do next?



BB Anchors & Juniors
together with GB
for evening led by
David Betts

Company and Seniors

It's been a very busy time for our older members. Apart from our usual Wednesday and Friday meetings, there have been several exciting activities.

- The lads had great enjoyment in participating with Boys from other BB Companies in a Laser Quest evening in Woking.
- The Seniors enjoyed working out how to get out of the "Escape Rooms" in the Market Square.
- David Betts, visiting the Company, led us in a challenging session on who we are, and what we can be.
- Our team of three, taking part in the BB National 10-pin bowling tournament in Bedfordshire, made it through the league stages, but were eliminated in the first of the knock-out rounds.
- We took part in the Battalion orienteering event in Alice Holt Forest, taking 5th place.

It was great to see our four youngest members get into uniform, following their six-week induction session.

After the half-term break, we will have Interests classes on the go, and we'll be making plans for our Winter Venture to the Brecon Beacons between Christmas and New Year, as well as taking part in Battalion chess and table tennis tournaments.

David Allan

Captain.



Girls' Brigade News

We've been continuing our autumn theme over the past few weeks, thinking about how the changing seasons can remind us to be strong, adaptable, and to work together. As the days get shorter, we've been talking about how we are called to be 'Lights in the Darkness' sharing God's love with those around us through small, bright moments of kindness and friendship that help lift us (and others) up when things feel gloomy.

We also recently joined with BB to have a session led by David Betts, where the girls and boys did lots of activities based around the theme of team-work.

A real highlight recently was our enrolment service, where we officially welcomed six new girls into our group! It was a lovely service where the n:vestigate group showed off a song they had been learning, and the older girls worked together to write and read the prayers of intercession. It's always lovely to see our group growing, and we can't wait to get to know our new members better in the weeks ahead.



n:vestigate girls with the paper flowers they made

After half term, we'll be turning our attention to all things Christmas (yes, already!). We're busy planning our stall for the Church Fair, where we'll be running a Jam Jar Tombola. We have plenty of jars, but if you have anything that might fit inside that you could donate please pass it onto a member of staff.



*Our
community!*

*All the com-
pany added
their
handprints
to the tree*

We've got a bit of room for more girls to join us, so if you know anyone who might like to come along, please spread the word. And as always, extra pairs of hands are more than welcome – whether it's helping with crafts, events, or just joining in the fun. Everyone's welcome, and we'd love to see some new faces as we head into this festive season together.

Amy Evans (Team Leader)

Ink Cartridge Collection for Anna Chaplaincy Fund

Another box of spent inkjet printer cartridges was sent off on 1st September for which we have received £9.30 for the Anna Chaplaincy Fund.

The L-shaped cartridges with a copper contact plate generate the most income – upwards of £1 each – but I also send off the single colour cartridges which generate a few pence each. Thank you for dropping off your used cartridges in the box in the Foyer at AMC.



Nancy Buck

Hard of Hearing Group At All Saints Church Hall, Alton



In October we were delighted to welcome back Sarah Slater to give us one of her delightful talks. Sarah is a guide at Hampton Court Palace, and this time she gave a talk entitled 'Kirtles, Corsets and Curtains' in which she described her journey into costuming. We were able to tell her that Alton once had its own Corset Factory, in which many local folk had worked. [Do let us know if you have any memories of the firm, La Gaine Scandale! We would love to hear from you.]

In November – on the 25th at 2pm, we will be holding our pre- Christmas party! Once again we will welcome a group from Alton Community Choir, led by Robin Kemp, who will help to put us in the mood for the festive season. In addition we will have lots of food – (with thanks in anticipation to Sarah Neish!) also a Quiz and a grand Raffle.

Our Programme for 2026 is being prepared – and we hope to have it available at November's party. It would be lovely if we could find one or two new volunteers to assist our group. If you might be able to help us for a couple of hours once a month on a Tuesday afternoon, please do get in contact with me!

Contact: Annette Blackman 01420 543219 or ablackman4@googlemail.com



Lip Reading

The last Lip-Reading session of this term will be on **Tuesday 4th November (no meeting in December)** **Please note** – if the proposed decorating of the Church Hall has commenced [the meeting will be held in the Welcome Area in All Saints Church at the usual time of 2pm. If this is the case, a notice will be on the Church Hall door to redirect you.](#)

For more details contact Kate on 07811 744843(text only) kaddan-do@gmail.com (or Annette 01420 543219)

Knitters Anonymous

Handmade with love



With seven large bags of knits waiting ready for collection by The Help for Refugees in the UK and Overseas Charity, and three bags of tiny knits for the BLISS charity for the premature babies, all you knitters and crochet craftswomen out there, both known and anonymous, should be justly proud of yourselves!! Please continue with your invaluable good work. Your generous donations and time spent crafting so many beautiful blankets and garments is really appreciated by both the charities we support.

Thank you for your response to last month's appeal for larger blankets. This month brightly coloured warm woolly hats for adults are requested for the winter. **Please Note** - If the proposed decorating of the Church Hall in November has not been completed by our **next meeting on Tuesday 18th November** the meeting will be held in the Welcome Area in All Saints Church, from 2pm. If this is the case, a notice will be on the Church Hall door to redirect you. Do drop in if you are passing. We would love to meet you!

For more details contact Kate on 07811 744843 (text only) kaddan-do@gmail.com (or Annette 01420 543219)

Flower Ministry

Our thanks go to the volunteers who carry love and good wishes from the church to someone each week with a bunch of flowers.

It might be to celebrate a special occasion or showing sympathy in a time of grief.



OPEN SIGHT



Alton Open Sight is a social club for those with a visual impairment which meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at 2.30pm. **The next meeting will be held on 17th November at Alton Place Care Home in Winchester Road** (as our usual venue is being redecorated) when we will be taking a "journey through space" with the help of resources from Living Paintings. Living Paintings is a company that provides free tactile books (with accompanying audio) for visually impaired people of all ages and this will our first experience of using these resources.

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.

Please note that there is no regular meeting in December as our existing members and volunteers will be enjoying a Christmas meal at The French Horn earlier in the month instead.

Alton Foodbank Appeal

Alton Foodbank needs donations of food to be able to support the many families who need our help. Food donations at our donation points have dropped by 20% - with your help we can reverse this trend!

We also need financial donations to be able to support those families and are currently reviewing our finances. We have less money available with which to run the Foodbank—this involves our running costs and buying food to top up donations.

As individuals you can make a one off donation or give regularly by standing order—including using gift aid so we can claim back any tax you have paid. For further information please visit www.altonfoodbank.org.uk or contact Sian Mills on info@altonfoodbank.org.uk

Camberley & District Silver Band

Free Concert



Join us for an evening of great music & community spirit

22nd November - 7 pm

DOORS OPEN AT 6.30PM - Retiring Collection

**Sandhurst & Yateley Methodist
Church, Scotland Hill, GU47 8JR**



<https://camberleyband.org.uk>

Made with PosterMyWall.com

Youth Clubs in Decline?

At the beginning of this October, the NEC in Birmingham was buzzing with energy, laughter, and the sound of over 1,800 children and young people feeling right at home.

3Generate 2025 – Journey of a Lifetime – was a beautiful reminder of what's possible when we create participatory space for young people to belong, be heard, and be themselves.

One young person said: "Coming to 3Generate was a great opportunity for me to strengthen my faith and strengthen my connection with God and find other like-minded Christians. Young people who thought and felt the same way as me... it's been really special."

In light of John Harris' article in [The Guardian from 12th October 2025](#), highlighting the decline of youth clubs in Britain as a direct result of austerity measures, 3Generate felt especially significant. The article paints a sobering picture: the erosion of safe, informal spaces where young people can build relationships with adults who aren't their parents or teachers, and with peers outside of social media. Harris argues that these spaces are vital for bridging divides, building confidence, supporting emotional and mental wellbeing and developing a sense of community.

And yet, this is precisely what church youth work – at its best – can offer, and what Methodists have offered for years. In fact, the Methodist Church could be described as a cradle of youth work, and it continues to be an important contributor. Whether it is a large scale event such as 3Generate or a small weekly gathering of a handful of teenagers sharing stories and playing games together, these "small and deep" places matter. Here, young people are known by name, they are encouraged to discuss probing questions, and they can meet adults who listen to them without judgement but with lots of care.

"Coming to 3Generate was a great opportunity for me to strengthen my faith and strengthen my connection with God and find other like-minded Christians. Young people who thought and felt the same way as me... it's been really special."

A young person talking about attending 3Generate 2025

Of course, not every local church can offer such a space. There is a general fatigue across the Connexion, and people are simply exhausted. But this is important work, and – as the article points out – it is urgent. So, even if our church is not in the position to set up a youth club, the question remains: how can we step into the gap and be there for our young generation?

- Could we offer a weekly drop-in? With hot drinks, snacks and a listening ear?
- Could we partner with local schools, uniformed groups and other community groups to offer pastoral support?

Could we ask young people and listen to what they need?

Church youth work is not a luxury – it's a necessity. In a world that can feel fragmented, confusing, and overwhelming, our churches can be places of healing, belonging, and joy.

[Report on www.methodist.org.uk]

Join us for an evening of fun, raising money to help end extreme poverty

**St Andrew's Church**

**The Good Shepherd**
four marks
Responding to God's Love

Church of the Good Shepherd
Four Marks
Saturday 15th November
6.45 for 7pm

Free admission
Teams consisting of 6 to 8 members
Cold buffet supper provided
Bring your own drinks and glasses
No registration of participant names required



Every penny raised will go to support the work of



Invite friends and neighbours to form a team. For more information, or to book your team in, email Rod Eckles: rwteckles@gmail.com

**FREE ENTRY**

Alton Concert Band,
Alton Choral Society & Ancora
Present in aid of **HOME START**

The Wonder of CHRISTMAS

A CONCERT OF CHRISTMAS
MUSIC & CAROLS

Saturday 6 December 2025
Doors open 6.30pm for 7.00pm
Alton Maltings

Entry only with a ticket available from
www.altonchoral.org.uk or
scan the QR code or
call 01420 85994



Booking opens 8th November

Sponsors:
Alton Maltings
Alton Co-operative
Beer Festival
Focus stoves

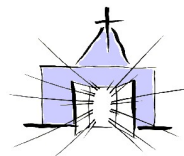
Dates for your Diary

NOVEMBER

Sun 2	4.00pm	Candles of Remembrance Service
Mon 3	6.30pm	GAP Indian Meal at the Spice Bank
Tues 4	12 noon 2.00pm	Prayers at Noon Singing our Faith
Thurs 6	7.30pm	Church Council
Tues 11	12.30pm	Lunch Club
Thurs 13	7.00pm	Stewards' Meeting at the Manse
Sat 15	2.00pm 6.45pm	CAMEO CoGS Quiz Night (see p 19)
Tues 18	2.00pm	Church Bible Study
Sat 22	7.00pm	Silver Band concert at Sandhurst & Yately Methodist Church (see p 21)
Thurs 27	10.00-12.00	Ladies @ Wetherspoons
Sat 29	10.00-12.00	Christmas Fair

Please look at articles in the Newsletter giving more information.

The December issue of the Newsletter should be available from Sunday 30th November.



Services at Alton in November 2025

Sunday 2nd	31st Sunday in Ordinary Time 10.00am Local Arrangement
Sunday 9th	Remembrance Sunday 10.00am Rev Sam Funnell, Deputy Chair of SE District
Sunday 16th	33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time 10.00am Liz George
Sunday 23rd	Sunday before Advent 10.00am Rev Sharon Gardner
Sunday 30th	Advent Sunday 10.00am Rev Philip Simpkins GAP Service here

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 88721.

Items for inclusion in the **December** issue of the **"Newsletter"** should reach the editor, Nancy Buck, by noon **Sunday 23rd November** at the latest, please.

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