

Alton Methodist Church

NEWSLETTER

January 2022



Minister: Rev. Philip Simpkins

Tel: 01420 83167

Church website www.altonmethodist.org.uk

Circuit website www.hsbccircuit.org.uk



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the very first edition of our Newsletter as we welcome in the New Year. We pray that 2022 will bring you many blessings, even among all the uncertainties and challenges that we face at present.

I looked for a hymn that might be suitable for the start of a new year and was reminded of Sydney Carter's words.

One more step along the world I go,
One more step along the world I go;
From the old things to the new,
Keep me travelling along with you:

*And it's from the old I travel to the new;
Keep me travelling along with you.*

This verse reminds us of the journey we are on in life, encouraged by Jesus to take one step, or more specifically one day at a time.

Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Mat. 6.34)

Jesus' words are not about blanking out the future, more about trusting each day into his hands, believing that he will give us the strength that we need. Looking too far ahead often leads to anxiety.

We can look forward however, to the new things we will learn as we step into 2022, the new adventures we will have and the new opportunities to serve and bless one another.

Round the corners of the world I turn,
More and more about the world I learn;
All the new things that I see
You'll be looking at along with me.

This applies to our faith too – there is always more to learn about the wonder and mystery of God.

As I travel through the bad and good,
Keep me travelling the way I should.
Where I see no way to go,
You'll be telling me the way, I know.

Of course, we know that 2022 will have both challenges and joys. There will be that which will both delight and test us in the days ahead. The hymn reminds us that even when we can't see through the fog of life, God will be there to gently lead and guide.

Give me courage when the world is rough,
Keep me loving though the world is tough;
Leap and sing in all I do,
Keep me travelling along with you:

In difficult times, we ask for courage and strength as well as the grace to keep on being that loving person we seek to be. What a challenge to 'leap and sing in all we do'! However, isn't it refreshing to be in the company of someone who finds reason to enjoy both life and God.

You are older than the world can be,
You are younger than the life in me;
Ever old and ever new,
Keep me travelling along with you:

Our final verse reminds us that God has been there from the beginning and will be there at the end. He is eternal and in him we can trust, our ever-faithful friend.

Why not make this hymn your prayer at the beginning of this new year and to pray 'Lord, keep me travelling along with you.'

Every blessing, Philip

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



Caring for Creation

5 Week House Group

Starting Monday Jan 10th at 7.30pm

A five week group discussion using material written by Brian David of York Courses on the topic of Caring for Creation.

Session 1 The Environment

Session 2 Global Warming & Climate Change

Session 3 The Age of Humans

Session 4 Coming Out of Denial

Session 5 Faith, Hope and Love

The course will include an audio presentation of about 10mins, material to reflect on together and discussion for everyone to participate in as you wish. (Course booklets will be purchased for you at a small cost)

We will be meeting on Zoom.

Please let Philip know if you are interested and add to those on the list to date. Thank you.

THANK YOU !

David Mason would like to thank everyone who helped him after his fall at church on Sunday 27th November.



Mercy Ships

Grandmother of three, Moira Munro from Dundee, Scotland, has just returned from volunteering on the world's first purpose-built hospital ship as it prepares to transform lives in West and Central Africa. But it's not the first time the intrepid 69-year-old has upped sticks and given

her time freely for international charity Mercy Ships, this was her sixth time serving.

Her services have included Madagascar, Cameroon and Senegal and her roles, having retired as a nurse, have varied from dining room assistant to housekeeper to dental care assistant.

"People come in with huge tumours and cataracts – they literally come in blind and then they leave and they can see. It's incredible to witness, to see their expressions and feel the transformation.

"People cover their faces with big scarves, people who have lived for years with disfigurements and isolated themselves. They come on board, and everything changes. Their lives actually begin again. It never gets old."

Until last weekend, Moira was onboard Mercy Ship's newest state-of-the-art hospital ship the Global Mercy, preparing it for serving in Senegal in spring 2022.

Over the coming months we will seek to raise funds to support the work of Mercy Ships and look forward to Sue Elliot coming to tell us of her experiences on Sunday Feb 27th at 10am.



Farewell to Rachel – our Anna Chaplain

A large congregation gathered on Advent Sunday both to worship together as the GAP churches and also to say thank you and farewell to Rachel, our Anna Chaplain for the last five years.

At the service Debbie Thrower spoke of the work of the Anna Chaplain and its origins in Alton – now spread around the country! She also thanked Rachel for her dedication and service. Other people also stood and offered their personal thanks for the support and care Rachel had offered. Gifts of garden tokens and flowers were presented to Rachel as she then thanked everyone for their encouragement and love.

Rachel spent her last few days visiting those that she was able too and also filming for 'Songs of Praise' on her very last day of work! It will be shown later in January.

Amongst many other farewells an evening meal was arranged with one group of friends and supporters at Pizza Express in Alton. Enjoyable conversation and a good meal was enjoyed by everyone. Thank you, Rachel for all you have done.

The post of Anna Chaplain is at present being advertised and it is hoped that we will be able to interview in January 2022.

Please do continue to support this important work both prayerfully and financially. We will need to be active in raising funds for the coming year/s once a new appointment has been made.



Messy Church

Messy Church in December proved to be another enjoyable Saturday morning well spent in the company of children and their parents.

Our advent theme included a great action song called 'Ooh, I'm an angel!' with everyone joining in.

The story followed the early adventures of Mary as she hears the news from an angel that she will bear a special child. Dressing up as Joseph, complete with a beard, also helped to describe the emotions of her husband to be!



The hall was buzzing with activity as children and parents made a variety of Christmas crafts which included icing a pregnant gingerbread person complete with 'bump and baby!'

Decorated craft trees, angels and clay modelling proved popular as did the creation of Christmas cards with nativity sponge figures.

Thank you to everyone who helped and cleared up afterwards.



Our next Messy Church is planned for Saturday February 5th 10-12noon.



Lunch Club - Christmas Lunch

A very enjoyable Lunch Club was held on 14th December and we managed to continue with windows open and masks before we ate!

About 55 guests ate turkey with all the trimmings and enjoyed chocolate roll courtesy of Sainsburys. The afternoon concluded with the singing of three carols and some Christmas reflections led by Philip.



Thanks to all the staff and especially Philip, Peter and David who organised the chairs and helped with the carol singing.

The only surprise was the unexpected arrival of the Food Inspector from EHDC. who looks at our Food preparation practices and the state of the kitchen! We never know when they will arrive but I really was not expecting him on the day of our Christmas lunch! However we passed with a grade 5 which is the best rating.

Our **next Lunch Club is on the second Tuesday in January** - the 11th - and all are welcome. Please book ahead by paying in advance for the next month (£7) or by calling Christine Allan (84739) We serve promptly at 12.30pm.

Christine Allan

Cameo Christmas Tea

Despite some initial concerns over whether or not it could go ahead, CAMEO members were able to gather at church for their Christmas Tea on 18th December. The afternoon began with a light-hearted quiz and some comedy sketches performed by Di and Judy, followed by a wonderful afternoon Christmas tea in the Hall.



With everyone wearing their Santa hats, the atmosphere was very festive. This was enhanced by the arrival of Father Christmas who spoke to everyone, gave out gifts and stayed for tea and cake!

The beautiful Christmas cake, made by Carol, finished the afternoon off very nicely indeed.

It was a special treat to have Philip and Angela with us and it was altogether a very happy occasion.

Many thanks go to all those who made it happen, including Debbie and kind donations from Sainsburys.

Next date for CAMEO: Film Afternoon on Saturday 15th January.

Janet Meager & Judy Nicholls

(With extra comments, including cake appreciation, from Philip)



Housekeeping Note!

Please do NOT leave **damp tea towels** draped in the kitchen. This is very much frowned upon by EHDC as they are a breeding ground for bacteria. You are welcome to use any of the tea towels in the box but please take them home to wash and iron and return! (Hirers who may not have access to the church to return towels should supply their own tea towels.)

Also **help** would be much appreciated with removing black sacks of rubbish from the church as the church has no dustbin collections and therefore they have to go into our household bins. If you see a sack and have transport please help with this small chore!

Christine Allan

Ladies @ Wetherspoons

Depending on the current guidelines, let's meet up for a chat on Thursday 27th January and welcome in the New Year, any time between 10am and noon.

Jennie Marlow

Church House Group

We hope to continue our look at Ephesians in 2022 on the first and third Tuesday afternoons – so 4th and 18th January - starting at 2.30pm. Come along if you are able.

Jennie Marlow

Action for Children

Thanks to all who supported the Bumper Coffee Morning, GB Christmas event and BB carol-singing. It means that Action for Children will be able to benefit to the tune of £362.40, which I'm sure will be appreciated and put to good use.



Jennie Marlow

Christingle Service

The church was packed with family groups for our Christingle Service on Christmas Eve. Each family had their own table and materials to make 4 Christingles.

We shared a prayer, watched a cartoon depiction of the Christmas Story and sang some carols (with actions, of course) before Philip demonstrated how to assemble a Christingle. Then it was over to us to do our best!

Philip's demonstration model—or is it a UFO?



Lighting the candles was delegated to a 'responsible' family member and then the lights went down so we could sing Silent Night by candle light.

Another prayer, and carol and then a rousing rendition of We Wish You a Merry Christmas, before setting off home in the dark, clutching a Christingle.

2nd Alton Company



It already seems an age ago, but Christmas is over and we are into a new year, complete with a calendar full of BB events.

But to round up last year first, we managed to raise £50.55 for Save the Children by having boys and staff wear Christmas jumpers one Friday evening and our carol singing raised almost £70 for Action for Children, both very worthy causes.

The Junior Section Team Games took place, and although the turnout was relatively low our boys came away with a certificate for 3rd place, so a big well done to them...that practise on Fridays must have paid off!

Moving forward, we hope to have a full programme in place where we can. Unfortunately at the moment it is not really possible to have band practice, so that is being suspended until it is more practicable.

The company section have the Battalion Chess Competition at the end of January and the Day of Action in February. This is a big day with many competitions and we hope that it can go ahead this year in some form.

Other things in the calendar include an orienteering event and an off-road cycle ride at half term.

Pete Burgess (captain)

Company Section

Video: At the start of December the Seniors premiered the comic video they had worked on together. Their aim of making the younger company boys laugh was achieved. Did we witness the early work of future comedy giants? Only time will tell.

Masks: Facemasks made an unwelcome but necessary return to our evenings. At least we were able to continue meeting up for full length meetings. Hopefully we will not need to return to the virtual world of Zooms.

Jumpers: We held a Christmas Jumper Evening, raising money for Save the Children. This was an opportunity for a party with a mix of physical and parlour games. Some boys even journeyed into space using the Company's bespoke launch vehicle.

Carols: On the evening of Wednesday 15th, some of the Company and Senior Sections joined with younger Brigade members and leaders to go Carol Singing in streets near to the church. Money was raised for Action for Children.

Season's Greetings: All the members of the 2nd Alton Boys' Brigade Company and Senior Sections wish you all a safe and happy New Year.

Lt. Rolfe Bridson

Anchors & Juniors

We celebrated Christmas Jumper Day at Boys Brigade on Friday 10th December. The Anchors and Juniors worked together to learn about those less fortunate than ourselves. Then we designed a Christmas jumper on gingerbread men and best of all - we got to eat them!



We started the evening with working on our Christmas work books; the 'Find 20 Differences' activity got very competitive between Mr Burgess and Libby! Philip popped in to join us and was challenged to have a go at the spot the difference.

Glenda Bentley

2nd Alton Girls' Brigade



These past weeks have seen all the girls preparing for the Christmas Fair by making tree decorations; glittery baubles were made by the vestigate section and Christmas tree decorations sewn from felt in the shape of Christmas trees, presents and stockings by the older girls. It was good to see so many girls and parents at the fair. Gill sold some of her no-longer-needed handbags & Jo sold knitted stocking filler parcels, both of which bumped up our takings. Thank you Gill & Jo.

The older girls have been considering giving and receiving through the story of Zacchaeus. We learnt the song "Zacchaeus was a very little man" in sign language, prepared for the Christmas Fair and we put together toiletry gifts & cards for the women's refuge.

The younger girls coloured cardboard nativity figures, listened to the Christmas story and learnt to sing Silent Night with Makaton signing. On the last evening we got out the dressing-up box and acted out the nativity story.

In the light of the recent increase in Covid infections we did not hold our usual Carols Evening but made a collection for Action for Children just the same; every penny will of course be put to good use.

Jo will celebrate a significant birthday whilst we on our Christmas break, so we presented her with a card and flowers and sung her Happy Birthday. Jo, we hope you have a lovely day.

Girls' Brigade will start again, all things being well, on Monday 10th January 2022. Any girl 4 ½ and over is welcome to join us for fun, games, bible stories and life skills. Please call Kym (07810 808944) or Nancy (01420 85994) for further details.

BB Christmas Post



Thank you to everyone who supported the Christmas Post. **We delivered 1114 cards, slightly more than last year's figure of 1101, and the income of over £300 to our Company funds is most welcome.**

We also express our thanks to Judith Janes and Nancy Buck for volunteering and helping the Boys and staff with our deliveries, and to the people who generously included a donation along with their stamp money.

David Allan

on behalf of all the BB Leaders



Lighthouse

Our Lighthouse group for children meets on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month during the morning service.

In January we will meet on Sunday 9th and Sunday 23rd.

New children are always welcome to join us and if you are able to let us know beforehand that will help us to plan the session.

Nancy Buck

JOIN ANNA TABBUSH AND
FOR AN UPLIFTING DAY OF
Ancora
'WOMEN'S SEA SHANTY SINGING!'



WORKSHOP
DATE:
SATURDAY 22ND
JANUARY 2022

Anna teaches traditional and contemporary songs from Britain and around the world. Plus some of her own compositions, which have been sung by choirs up and down the country and around the world. Anna will teach us sea shanties by ear in luscious harmony in a workshop which will be fun and accessible for both novices and experienced singers alike. She will get us singing, smiling and sounding gorgeous within minutes!

VENUE: ALTON METHODIST CHURCH

TIME: 10:00AM ARRIVE FOR
REGISTRATION AND COFFEE –
START AT 10.30AM.

COST IS £15.00

THERE WILL BE A 30 MINUTE LUNCH
BREAK WITH HOMEMADE SOUP,
SCONES AND CAKE, ALL INCLUDED
IN THE PRICE.

TO BOOK YOUR PLACE, EMAIL:
tansey.barbara1@gmail.com





ECO CHURCH
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT



Craft Swap

Saturday 19th February - 2-4pm

**St Lawrence Hall (Parish Centre),
Vicarage Hill, Alton, GU34 2BW**

**Bring your arts and crafts 'leftover supplies' and take what
you need... free and open to all!**



***Wool, haberdashery, papercraft,
paints, craft books, fabric, rubber
stamps, beads, jewellery, stickers,
craft storage and more!***

Donations can be left in the marked boxes at St Lawrence and All Saints Churches in Alton, St Peter's Church in Beech, the Church of the Holy Rood, Holybourne, St Mary's Churches in Bentworth and Lasham and St Peter and St Paul's Church in Shalden during January and early February.

Parish of the Resurrection, Alton

W: www.potr-alton.co.uk T: 07865 292401 E: potr.alton@btinternet.com

Eco Corner

R-R speed record



Rolls-Royce has tested a new all-electric aircraft, which it says could be the fastest plane of its type in the world. The Spirit of Innovation aircraft achieved a top speed of 387.4mph during one of three test runs in Wiltshire.

Over a distance of 1.9 miles (3km) the all-electric plane reached a top speed of 345.4mph. It then hit 330mph over 9.3 miles (15km).

Aerospace company Rolls-Royce, said that its aircraft travelled more than 132mph faster than the previous record set by the Siemens e-powered Extra 330 LE Aerobatic in 2017.

While a racing aircraft is about as useless as a Formula 1 car to most of us, such things really push technology from which we can all eventually benefit. The aircraft was powered by a very high energy battery which has potential to improve the speed and range performance of electric cars and trucks.

Batteries for electric vehicles use elements such as Lithium and Cobalt. The old Cornish tin and copper mining area based on Redruth is rich in lithium and may prove worth exploiting.

In the 19th Century, the Mining Exchange building in Redruth town centre was the place for trading and exchanging copper and tin and the only mining exchange outside of London. The exchange had an ingenious way of capitalising on the fervour and chaos of the trading process – they fined mine captains for swearing, all proceeds went to fund the Miners' Hospital!

Nigel Hughes

Dates for your Diary

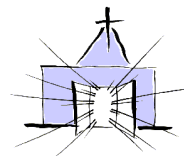
JANUARY

Tues 4	2.30pm	Church Bible Study Group
Mon 10	7.30pm	Caring for Creation (1) (see p4)
Tues 11	12.30pm	Lunch Club
Sat 15	2.00pm	CAMEO Film Afternoon
Mon 17	7.30pm	Caring for Creation (2)
Tues 18	2.30pm	Church Bible Study Group
Sat 22	10.00am	Sea Shanty singing with Ancora (see p16)
Mon 24	7.30pm	Caring for Creation (3)
Thurs 27	10.00am	<i>Ladies @ Wetherspoons</i>
	7.00pm	GB District Officers' Meeting
Sat 29		BB Leaders' Training Day
Mon 31	7.30pm	Caring for Creation (4)

FEBRUARY

Tues 1	2.30pm	Church Bible Study Group
Sat 5	10.00-12.00	Messy Church
Mon 7	7.30pm	Caring for Creation (5)

Please look at articles in the Newsletter giving more information.
The February issue of the Newsletter should be available from Sunday 30th January.



Services at Alton in January 2022

Sunday 2nd	2nd Sunday of Christmas 10.00am Jennie Marlow
Sunday 9th	1st Sunday in Ordinary Time 10.00am Rev Philip Simpkins - Covenant Service
Sunday 16th	2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time 10.00am David Betts
Sunday 23rd	3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time 10.00am Liz George
Sunday 30th	4th Sunday in Ordinary Time 10.00am Rev Dee Yeadon

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 **February** issue of the "**Newsletter**" should reach the editor, Nancy Buck, by noon **Sunday 23rd January** at the latest, please.

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