

Alton Methodist Church

NEWSLETTER



June 2025

Minister: Rev. Philip Simpkins

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Church website www.altonmethodist.org.uk

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



Dear Friends,

Much to the surprise of my congregation at The Spire Church in Farnham, I took along our Dyson DC41 (Vacuum Cleaner) one Sunday morning and gave a demonstration of its ability to clean the carpet! Some of the children even offered to have a go!

This wasn't in any way a criticism of the cleanliness of the Church but was to give me an opportunity to talk about Sir James Dyson.

Sir James is perhaps of particular interest to me, as for many years his working base was in Malmsbury, Wiltshire – with his engineering factory right opposite where I went to school.

Sir James Dyson is reported to be a billionaire and one of the richest men in the UK. His generosity of spirit led him to help fund the 'Dyson Centre for Cancer' at the Royal United Hospital, Bath.

In the early days he becomes famous for his revolutionary vacuum cleaner with its bagless design and a moulded plastic ball for a wheel. You could even see the dirt and dust that you had collected! His idea was rejected at first by British retailers, however the Japanese liked it and by the mid 90's his bagless cleaner was hailed as a great success.

Not all Dyson's inventions proved to be a triumph, but his Air Blade Hand Dryer also did, drying hands in less than 10 seconds.

Having demonstrated the Dyson DC41 to my congregation, I went on to explain that Sir James and his team had 5,127 failed attempts before they finally succeeded in creating the finished product.

In an interview with the BBC he said:

'The most important thing you need you need when redesigning something is perseverance and a willingness to fail.'

'Developing an idea takes time and patience'

‘Failure is the best medicine – as long as you learn something.’

That’s a great attitude to have, isn’t it!

Many people in the bible went through times when they had failed ‘big time’ (and they had!).

Noah made an embarrassing mistake when he drank too much wine after landing the ark – his family were mortified!

Abraham made a mistake in telling a ‘white lie’ when challenged by the Egyptians about his beautiful wife – he said she was his sister in fear of what they might do to him (she was his half-sister).

David made a mistake when he was tempted by the sight of Bathsheba, another man’s wife. Having had an affair, he then tried to cover his tracks, only to make things worse.

Peter made many a mistake when he said or did the wrong thing, much less denying his Lord three times when challenged by a servant girl and others in the courtyard.

Paul made the mistake of giving up on ‘John Mark’, thinking him a failed missionary with no courage, only later for Mark to prove himself, and become a great companion and writer of the second Gospel.

And as for me, I’ve no doubt made many a mistake. As a Christian I might be described as *‘a work in progress’*, but I am glad that God is always ready to forgive.

Through every mistake and failure, we can learn something and by perseverance and patience, we are encouraged to pick ourselves up and carry on.

Now back to the hoovering... (oh no, my mistake, that was invented by William Henry Hoover in 1908!)

Every blessing,

Philip

The Compass Course ***Exploring Christian Faith Together***

This eight-session study began after Easter in a house group held at the Manse on a **Tuesday, fortnightly, at 7.30pm.**

This interactive course produced by the Methodist Church covers the following sessions:

1. Glimpses of God (May)
2. Meeting Jesus today (May)
3. The difference Jesus makes (**June 17th**)
4. Empowered by the Holy Spirit (**July 1st**)
5. Life Together (**July 15th**)
6. Engaging with scripture
7. Following Jesus
8. Called by name

It is a course suitable for those wishing to explore and grow in faith through teaching, discussion and reflection.

In the first session we explored glimpses of God and discussed what we thought God was like as seen in scripture and experienced in life.

Gathering our thoughts together at the end we were challenged to create Psalm 151(!) and in five minutes came up with the following:

*God you are loving,
Your presence calms my soul.
You are indefinable,
Big is not big enough!
You light my path,
You are with me whenever I need you.
You are the finder of the lost and
The keeper of our souls.
Alleluia, Praise the Lord!*

You are welcome to join us for any session that you can make.

Lunch Club



Chicken in a sauce, roast potatoes, green beans, carrots and courgettes were greatly enjoyed at the lunch in May.

This was all followed by a refreshing lemon cheesecake and a cup of tea.

Jenny had been out picking flowers from her garden and then used them to highlight the beauty of God's creation in a short devotion at the end.

We are very grateful to Andy, Denise and all the Lunch Club team who provide a wonderful lunch and an opportunity for companionship around the table.

The next lunch club is on June 10th, price £4.50 (until September when it will rise to £5. Not only can you pay in cash but as from June a 'Tap and Pay' machine will be on hand for card payment – all mod cons!

News from around the Methodist Circuit



Synod has agreed to the Hampshire Surrey Border Circuit and the Berkshire Surrey Borders Circuit becoming the 'Blackwater Valley Methodist Circuit' as of Sept 1st 2025.

A celebration of the formation of the new circuit will be held on **Monday September 1st at High Cross Church, Camberley**. The service will be led by Rev Conrad Hicks (New Chair of the South East District) and known to some of us. We will also be welcoming the Rev Wes Hampton to the new circuit, who comes from his present appointment in Broadstairs.

It would be really encouraging if a contingent from Alton could be represented at this service, as we share fellowship and ministry with one another.

(If you want a lift let Philip know!)



MSF, Doctors without Borders, is our chosen charity for this 'Methodist Year' (until August 2025).

Thank you to everyone who has donated to this great cause through coffee mornings, concerts and fundraisers.

25% of our Church gift day funding (July 2025) will also go to MSF.

A news bulletin from MSF reports the following:

At a Ukrainian hospital located closest to the eastern frontline, MSF teams provide surgical care to both war-wounded patients, and to those whose chronic conditions have been made worse by delay and require surgery.

Working with a headlamp in case of power outages, Dr Khassan El-Kafarna does what he can for patients like Volodymyr, who is suffering from a rare type of gangrene.

It is quiet in the hospital. The corridors are poorly lit despite the bright sunny morning. At night, Russian military drones were flying over the city, the resulting sound of explosions made it hard for patients to sleep, so now they are napping in their rooms.

Volodymyr is waiting for his second surgery. He is from the village of Komar in Donetsk region, located less than six miles from the frontline.

He came to the hospital four days ago with Fournier's gangrene – a type of flesh-eating disease that should have been treated much earlier.

"I could no longer walk, my neighbour had to bring me to the hospital. I should have come about a month ago, but I just couldn't make it," says Volodymyr.

"It is hell in our village now. The entire street was destroyed; everyone is hiding in their basements. As soon as it seems to become quieter, the shelling starts again."

Patients such as Volodymyr who have neglected diseases are common in this hospital, the closest medical facility to the eastern frontline that provides secondary care. It is located at the intersection of three regions with active fighting, so it receives high numbers of people seeking medical help.

Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders (MSF) teams support the facility's emergency department and operating theatre.

Teams also conduct ambulance referrals for patients who need to be examined by highly specialised surgeons in hospitals further away from the frontline. This helps to alleviate the burden on the health facility, however, patients with complications do not stop coming.

People come here from the frontline communities of Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia regions, where the shelling does not stop, even for a day.

The living conditions there are difficult. Patients often do not have access to medicines and medical care, or to food and hygiene items, spending most of their time hiding in the basements of their homes.¹

This news bulletin highlights just some of the amazing work MSF does around the world in places where there is conflict and a lack of resources. Thank you for supporting their work.

1. [Ukraine: Operating near the frontline | MSF UK](#)

New Charity for 2025-2026

At the Annual Meeting on Sunday 18th May it was decided that the church should support Naomi House children's hospice during the year beginning September 2025.

Ladies @ Wetherspoons

Why not pop into Wetherspoons for coffee and chat on **Thursday 26th June** any time between 10am and 12, we'd love to see you.



Prayers at Noon

Let's welcome the month of June on **Tuesday 3rd** at 12 o'clock for 15-20 minutes in prayer to God for his guidance and help for our concerns and listen out for any response.

Singing our Faith

The group meets again at 2pm on **Tuesday 3rd June** to share in words and music our praise to God. A by-product is that singing is good for the brain - so a double whammy!



I am emptying the home collecting boxes now, to help continue the work of this Methodist-based charity. I know there is less cash being used but thank you to those who still pop their spare coins (and notes!) in their box. If you would like to make a donation to add to the total please make your cheque payable to Action for Children and I'll be delighted to send it on.

Thank you - Jennie Marlow) (85698



May Market – excellent result!

Thank you to all who contributed to the success of our May Market, whether by running a stall, providing goods to sell or coming and spending your money.

We took a total of £658.22 in cash on the day and collected another £23 in credit card payments (reduced to £22.60 after charges) which gives a **grand total of £680.82** credited to church funds.

Nancy Buck

2nd Alton News



Following our successful Annual Display, the Boys are now out of uniform and into their informal summer programmes.

Anchors

The boys did a great job at the display and have now started their summer programme. We did some planting on our first night and have lots of exciting evenings to come including a joint bring a friend night with GB.



Juniors

Juniors are looking forward to their summer programme.

Company and Seniors



On 11th May, we “manned” the water station at the 8-mile mark for the Alton Ten road race. It’s an enjoyable duty, and we usually receive a donation to our funds from Alton Runners.

Providing water to runners on the Alton Ten -mile race

268 teams took part in the BB National Top Team Challenge, a competition that takes place in your own Centre. We entered two teams, and to our delight (and surprise!) our A Team took 2nd place! Well done, lads! (Our B

Team were 139th=, which is also a creditable ranking – nearly in the top half of the field!) Thank you, Alan Robb, for acting as our adjudicator and checking that we kept to the rules.

Already we've had our first informal meeting, playing football, non-stop cricket and hockey on The Butts green. Next comes a visit to Woking, to play Laser Quest; it's great fun – speak to me if you'd like to know more!

David Allan (Captain)

Girls' Brigade News

The youngest girls, in n:vestigate section, have been thinking about holidays – where you can stay, what you can do, etc. Last week we were hearing about the Israelites escape from Egypt and their travelling accommodation in tents. We played a parachute game and then made a shelter from the parachute and some chairs. Afterwards we made a model tent from cardboard strips, a paper plate and a square of fabric and a pipe-cleaner person to sit inside it.



The n:gage and n:counta groups took part in the national GB challenge, a series of tasks overseen by impartial judges (thank you Philip and Angela!). This year the activities were based around parts of the story of Moses. The results and 'evidence' will get submitted to Central Office for judging and then we will get a national ranking.

With half-term holiday fast approaching we are arranging a day out for the girls on Friday 30th May, during the holiday.

On Friday 27th June we will be joining with the younger boys of 2nd Alton BB for a film night when Lilo and Stitch will be on the big screen. I hear there will be the opportunity to for all to make a lei in advance so we can really get in the mood.

Nancy Buck & Amy Evans



Fun in the parachute tent





Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Matthew Richards was pleased to attend the reception for Gold Award Holders at Buckingham Palace recently. The Duke of Edinburgh gave a short speech before doing a walkabout and talking to the young achievers.

David Allan
(Boys' Brigade DofE Manager for Great Britain)



In the palace gardens

CAMEO NEWS

April's meeting was led by one of our members, Liz Parsons, who showed us two ancient phylacteries, treasured possessions passed down from her grandfather who purchased them in Jerusalem, where he lived and worked. Phylacteries are small leather boxes containing Hebrew texts on vellum, worn on the head and left arm by Jewish men at prayer as a reminder to keep the law. It was a rare privilege to handle objects of such antiquity and spiritual significance.



Liz encouraged other members to share at future meetings any interesting or unusual objects that they might possess. She's got us all searching at the back of our cupboards for long-forgotten treasures!

At our next meeting, on 24th May, Anna Mitchell is sharing with us something of her journey from growing up in Essex to making her home here in Alton, just a few years ago.

On June 7th at 2pm our meeting will be an Open one, with everyone invited to enjoy an afternoon of music and song. We are so grateful that Rebecca and Claire have agreed to return to AMC for the third year, to delight us with their singing and playing. As usual they are performing for free and all donations will go to our church charity of the year, Médecins sans Frontières. Refreshments will be served after the concert. Don't miss it!



Judy, Janet & Anna

OPEN SIGHT

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 16th June** when we will be entertained by the very popular “Chapter and Verse” theatre group.

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, no commitment, just come along to one of our meetings and we’re sure you’ll enjoy it!

If you would like further information regarding the Alton social group please email Sue at AltonOpenSight@gmail.com or contact Malcolm on 01420 54952

The group comes under the umbrella of Open Sight, a Hampshire-based charity which provide free support and advice to visually impaired people to assist with daily living. If you are interested finding out more, please call Open Sight on 02380 641244.



Alton All Saints Hard of Hearing Club



For our May meeting we had the pleasure of welcoming our very own Kate Dando who talked about Hearing Loss and how to improve communication by using Listening Skills. She provided us with some very useful advice and guidance.

On June 24th – we will be having our Ascot Tea – horses not obligatory but do wear your best hat for the occasion! There will be scones with jam and cream – and possibly a little bubbly. Tea and coffee will also be served and we will have a Bumper Raffle – with items donated by members.

Entrance to the meeting is £3 and the raffle is £1 a ticket. So a fun and entertaining afternoon for a minimum of £3!! Where else could you find such value!

If you do not have a 2025 Programme then do get in touch with me and I can send one to you. The start time for the meetings is 2pm and the venue is usually at All Saints Church hall unless the Programme states otherwise.

Contact: Annette Blackman 01420 543219

ablackman4@googlemail.com

Lip Reading



Just a reminder - there are regular Lip Reading Sessions held at All Saints Church hall, Queens Road, giving you tips and techniques that can help you if your poor hearing means that you have difficulty in joining in conversations with friends and family. Led by Maggie Short, Lip Reading Tutor, the **next session will be held on Tuesday 2nd June from 2pm - 3pm** followed by a chance to practice the skills learnt while chatting over light refreshments. Why not come along, make some new friends experiencing similar difficulties and give it a try? You will be made most welcome!

For more details contact Kate on 01420 83514 kaddando@gmail.com

Knitters Anonymous



Thanks to your generous donations and amazing knitting skills I was able to deliver four large bags of assorted knits to the BLISS collecting point at the end of May. This included almost two hundred tiny hats! The Area Organiser has asked that grateful thanks be extended to all those of you who knit and donate these vital items, and also to those who take them.

We were also able to pass on eight large bags of colourful, warm clothing to our contact in Farnham who will pass some of the donations on to the Ukrainian charity and some to a group who support asylum seekers in the UK, many of whom are now being removed from hotels into accommodation which has literally nothing for them. The blankets, especially will be most useful there. Contacts are also being made in Syria so future donations will hopefully make their way there too.

With so much need, all your donations and prayers go in some small way to helping those who find themselves in these terrible situations. Thank you all so much!!

Donations can continue to be left in the box at back of All Saints Church or brought to the monthly **Knitting Afternoon, the next of which will be on 17th June from 2pm until 3.30pm** in All Saints Church hall, Queens Road. Do pop in for a chat and to see what we do, and remember new knitters are always welcome!

[For further details contact kaddando@gmail.com](mailto:kaddando@gmail.com) or 01420 83514

Alton Choral Society Summer Concert

Saturday 28th June, 7pm

Alton Methodist Church

Featuring:-

**Excerpts from Haydn's Missa Sancti Nicolai
and other music of Jane Austen's time**

**Tickets £12 adults, children under 16 free
Available through www.altonchoral.org.uk
or on the door**

In aid of Broadlands (Riding for the Disabled)

Dates for your Diary

JUNE

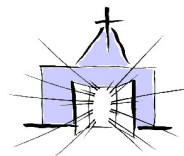
Mon 2	2.00pm	Finance Committee at Berehurst
Tues 3	12.00 noon	Prayers at Noon
	2.00pm	Singing our Faith
	7.30pm	Family Committee
Thurs 5	7.00pm	Property Committee at Old Schoolhouse
Sat 7	2.00pm	CAMEO open meeting with music from Rebecca and Claire
Tues 10	12.30pm	Lunch Club
Wed 11	2.00-4.00pm	Anna Chaplaincy Summer Event
Thurs 12	7.30pm	Church Council
Tues 17	7.30pm	Compass Course (3) at the Manse
Thurs 19	2.00pm	Pastoral Visitors meeting
Sat 28th	7.00pm	Alton Choral Society Summer Concert

JULY

Sat 5	10.00-12.00	Church Gift Day and Coffee Morning
Sun 6	10.00am	Church Anniversary service

Please look at articles in the Newsletter giving more information.

The July/August issue of the Newsletter should be available from Sunday 28th June.



Services at Alton in June 2025

Sunday 1st	7th Sunday of Easter
	10.00am Songs of Praise (Local Arrangement)
Sunday 8th	Pentecost
	10.00am Jennie Marlow
Sunday 15th	Trinity Sunday
	10.00am Rev Philip Simpkins - Holy Communion
Sunday 22nd	12th Sunday in Ordinary Time
	10.00am Alan Goldring
Sunday 29th	13th Sunday in Ordinary Time
	10.00am Liz George

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 **July/August** issue of the “**Newsletter**” should reach the editor, Nancy Buck, by noon **Sunday 22nd June** at the latest, please.

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