

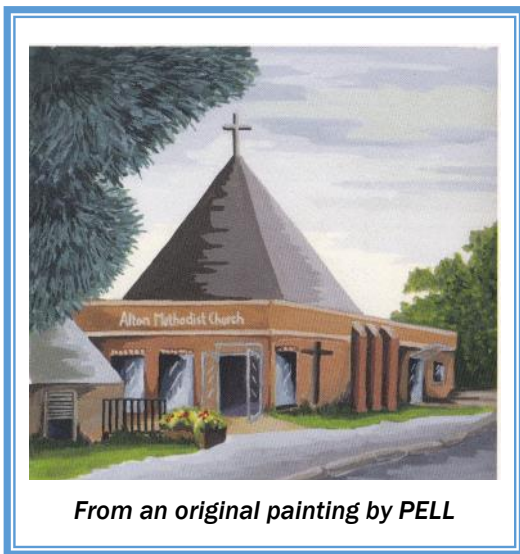
Alton Methodist Church

NEWSLETTER



July/August 2024

1846 - 2024
Alton Methodist
Church
Anniversary Weekend
6th-7th July



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,

There is so much going on at present!

You might be engrossed in the highs and lows of tennis from Wimbledon, the later stages of footballs European Championship, or looking forward to the Olympics to be held in Paris. Then again you may be gripped by national politics with just a few days to go until the general election on July 4th!?!

Whilst many have become disillusioned with the later, we are privileged to live in a society where we are able to express our opinions through the ballot box, something that many around the world are denied.

There has often been a debate about the role of Christianity/religion in politics with some wanting to keep it separate however the bible shows us on many occasions that our faith is about the whole of life.

The Joint Public Issues Team (Churches working for Peace and Justice) have provided **six hopes for society** that can guide our thinking.

A **just economy** that enables the flourishing of all of life – at a time when many are struggling to make ends meet through the cost-of-living crisis.

A **world that actively works for peace** - in what has become a very volatile and dangerous place.

A **society that welcomes the stranger** – a hot topic at present that brings many practical challenges.

A **society where the poorest and most marginalised** are at the centre – The bible has much to say about the way we are called to care for such people with compassion and generosity.

A **planet where our environment is renewed** – We have become much more aware of the damage done to the world around us, but is there the political will to respond effectively?

A **politics characterised by listening, kindness and truthfulness** – Integrity,

understanding, honesty and compassion from those elected to serve is essential!

We are also **encouraged to pray** for those elected to serve. Whilst living in the Roman Empire the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy these words:

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. (1 Timothy 2.1-2)

As Christians, we are then, to be engaged in the world and work of politics, sharing our hopes and dreams, placing our vote on election day and praying that those elected may live up to their calling to make a difference in society!

Beauty for brokenness
Hope for despair
Lord, in the suffering
This is our prayer
Bread for the children
Justice, joy, peace
Sunrise to sunset
Your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives
Cures for their ills
Work for the craftsman
Trade for their skills
Land for the dispossessed
Rights for the weak
Voices to plead the cause
Of those who can't speak

*God of the poor
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame*

Refuge from cruel wars
Havens from fear
Cities for sanctuary
Freedoms to share
Peace to the killing-fields
Scorched earth to green
Christ for the bitterness
His cross for the pain

Rest for the ravaged earth
Oceans and streams
Plundered and poisoned
Our future, our dreams
Lord, end our madness
Carelessness, greed
Make us content with
The things that we need.

Graham Kendrick

Every blessing, *Philip*

Autumn House Group

Tuesdays from Sept 10th 7:30-8.45pm

(Fortnightly at The Manse 14 Princess Drive)

Based on the Life Builder Study Guide on:

‘Gratitude’

Giving Thanks in Life’s Ups and Downs

It would be helpful to know who might like to come!

Contact: Philip & Angela 01420-83167

Messy Church

Messy Church in June was quieter than usual; however, we had a relaxed and enjoyable time mingling with children and parents/ grandparents as we explored the theme of 'Being Thankful' based on the story of the Ten Lepers.



As you can see, decorating biscuit people looking very sick proved popular as always! Other crafts included the big painting which always attracts children and parents to discover their artistic skills.

Some made 'Thank You' cards and others enjoyed being creative with play dough.

Those who wanted a challenge sought to make a person with moveable arms who represented the leper who returned to Jesus to give thanks and praise.

We do appreciate all those who continue to offer to help with Messy Church and after a break in July and August we will reevaluate starting again in the autumn.



Alton Methodist Church Anniversary & Gift Day

Saturday July 6th & Sunday July 7th

Dear Friends,

We are so grateful for the life of our church and the rich fellowship and friendship we share, thankful to the many people who contribute so much of their love, time, and resources first to God and in turn to Alton Methodist. Thank you!

This year, during our anniversary weekend we will be holding a coffee morning on Saturday 6th July 10-12noon and then a worship service led by Rev David Ashby on Sunday 7th July at 10am. We would love to see you at both events!

Each year we are also dependent financially on our annual gift day which helps resource the life of the church. This year 75% of monies raised will go towards the church and 25% towards the work of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF).

If you feel able to donate, then please place your gift in the attached envelope or by bank transfer referenced 'Gift Day'.

Many thanks for your ongoing support and amazing generosity.

Rev Philip Simpkins

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Name of account: Alton Methodist Church

Bank: CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling,
Kent ME19 4JQ

Bank sort code: 40-52-40 Account number: 00007758

Pilgrimage!

We have been thrilled to hear of Anne Miller's pilgrimage!

Anne has walked 'The Saints Way' from Padstow to Fowey as the first part of her adventure.



We then heard from Anne during a church service about her epic trip sailing the high seas in a 'Tall Ship' from Fowey to Spain.

Following a special service of blessing Anne then bravely set sail on a beautiful morning in June after learning to climb the rigging!

We were privileged to receive updates and amazing photographs as the 8 day journey to Spain progressed.

Anne was even trained to steer the ship towards her destination! No stormy seas in sight!

Following an amazing experience, we give thanks that Anne has safely reach Spain and is at present walking the 100 miles or so to Santiago de Compostela via the Camino Ingles.



Thank you for all your donations towards Mission Aviation Fellowship in support of Anne!

Hants- Surrey Border Methodist Circuit News



In June Rev Anne Day (Minister at Aldershot and North Camp) travelled to Leeds for the Methodist Conference where during two very special services she was welcomed into 'Full Connexion' and then Ordained at Brighthouse Central Methodist Church.

Philip was privileged to be asked to be Anne's supporting minister, laying on hands at the ordination and joining with the congregation in praying for her. She will return to continue her valued ministry in our local circuit.

During July we will say **farewell to Rev Gina Hoff in a Circuit Service held at Cove Methodist Church on Sunday July 14th** to which all are welcome. Gina has served in Frimley Green, Cove and The Chapel at Ash Methodist Church for the last nine years. Her ministry has been greatly valued. Gina is moving to the Isle of Wight and will live in East Cowes serving as minister in the circuit.

On September 1st we will have a special circuit welcome service for Deacon Joy Everingham and Rev Kyung Mi Banks at The Spire Church, Farnham at 7pm.

Joy moves from Nottingham to take up her role as Deacon serving primarily at The Spire, Farnham, but also working alongside Philip at Hale, Rowledge and Alton as time and opportunity allows. We have sung some of Joy's songs in our online services during and following Covid!

Rev Kyung Mi Banks comes as a probationary minister serving within the circuit at Cove, Frimley Green and Hartley Wintney.

Church Family News

We wish summer blessings for all those who cannot make it to church and for those who are unwell, waiting for appointments or treatment.

We are pleased **Steve Marsden** is now recovering following his surgery.

Prayers at Noon

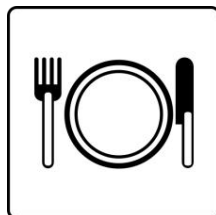
We had our biggest number to date last month. However, it's not about quantity but about bringing our concerns to God in spoken or silent prayer. We will be meeting on 2nd July but not in August.

Jennie Marlow

Church Lunch Club

It was lovely to welcome both regular and new friends to the June lunch club at Alton Methodist.

Andy, Denise and their team cooked a much-appreciated meal of white fish, vegetables, tomatoes and all the trimmings. It was delicious! The main course was followed by strawberries and cream which proved to be very refreshing.



After a short reflection based on the TV classic 'Keeping Up Appearances' and the way God is more interested in what we are like on the inside, we all went home satisfied!

The next lunch is on Tuesday July 9th 12:30 to 1:45pm at £4.

As Philip is on annual leave, please let **Liz George** know if you wish to add, change or amend a lunch booking on **01420-88721**

We will give the lunch club team a well-deserved break during August and resume our church lunches in September on Tuesday 10th 2024.

From **October** the lunch club will increase its price to **£4.50** per person to allow for rising costs and to support the work of the church.

Thank you to a great team of people who help in so many ways!

Singing our Faith

Anyone is welcome to come and have a go at singing some hymns, followed by a cuppa of tea and biscuit. We will meet on Tuesday 2nd July at 2pm. It not in August



Ladies at Wetherspoons

If you are not sunning yourself on holiday why not join us for a get together cuppa? We'll be there on Thursday 25th July and 29th August from 10am.

Jennie Marlow

CAMEO NEWS

In May, CAMEO members were happy to join with others for an afternoon of Board Games, raising funds for M.A.F. After some fierce competitiveness we relaxed over Afternoon Tea with delicious sandwiches, scones and cakes provided by Angela and Christine.

On a very wet June afternoon, the hardy souls who had braved the weather were taken on an adventure to view the Northern Lights, courtesy of some excellent photographs and informative commentary. Thank you Nigel for such an interesting afternoon.

Our next meeting is on July 13th when Bob Booker will regale us with tales from his time as a Circuit Judge.

Janet & Judy.



Alton's Anna Chaplaincy Spring Event

The Alton Lion's kindly gifted The Anna Chaplaincy a grant to hold a series of Anna Chaplaincy Events. The Spring Event (which took place at the end of May) was the 4th of its kind and a lovely afternoon was had by all!

We set up the Alton Methodist Church with craft tables, bric-a-brac stalls and hand massage stations as well as reserving a large area for chatting. Just before moving into the hall for a delicious homemade afternoon tea, we were treated to a piano recital and quiz by Jackie Stone, a curate from Farnborough who has been shadowing Kate (the Anna Chaplain) as part of her training.

About 50 older people came and their generous donations means there is enough funding to run a similar style event at Christmas which we are already looking forward to!



If you know of anyone who might like a visit by The Anna Chaplaincy Team, please contact Kate Powell, Anna Chaplain, on 07539 026546.

Girls' Brigade News

A great day was had by girls and staff when we went to the Heron's Wey site near Tilford during half-term.



It was a worrying start to the day for Kym when one staff car (counted on for transport) was out of commission and one girl failed to turn up at church. However we managed to fit safely in the available cars and the missing girl, who had forgotten all about it, turned up halfway through the morning after her parents picked up our messages and drove her to the site.



The first task was to go foraging in the woods for a selection of leaves and twigs. The green and juicy leaves were used to make a natural dye print on cloth – the girls really seemed to enjoy pounding away at the folded cloth with a pebble to transfer the plant juices to it. The other leaves, twigs, etc were woven into a framed grid of wool to make an interesting artwork of 'found' objects.

Bouldering was next on the agenda – a big squarish rock with grips fastened at intervals around it was the basis of a variety of climbing games and races. Then time for sandwiches and a drink.

After lunch we set off for the grass sledging slope. The sledges have tracks so they will roll down the slope. Libby Bentley put in sterling work launching most of the girls for multiple goes. I'm glad to report there were no severed fingers – just one twisted ankle.

Last (and perhaps best) of the booked activities was the zip wire! Again, Libby was active at the launch platform as one girl after another whizzed down the wire and (halfway) back again.





We finished the day with a campfire and sing-song. Marshmallows were toasted on sticks and there were sticky faces and hands.

Since half-term we've been enjoying a variety of activities, both indoor and outdoor.

Our last meeting of the term will be on Monday 15th July when we'll be having games and hot dogs in Jo Hunter's garden.

N:vestigate girls at Kings Pond with their I-Spy sheets.



HIDDEN TREASURES

I will give you the treasures of darkness
and riches hidden in secret places,
so that you may know that it is I, the Lord,
the God of Israel, who call you by name.

Isaiah 45:3

**2nd Alton Boys' Brigade
&
2nd Alton Girls' Brigade**



Movie Night

On Friday 7th June 2nd Alton BB & GB had a bring a friend movie night

27 children came to watch Moana and enjoyed sweets, fruit shoots & an ice lolly in the interval.

We have recruited a few new boys and girls to BB and GB who came along to



the film show as a friend.

As always, if you know of any girls aged 4½ up and boys aged 5 up we would love to meet them.

Glenda Bentley

Reverend Gina's Farewell Service
 Cove Methodist Church
 14th July 6.30 pm

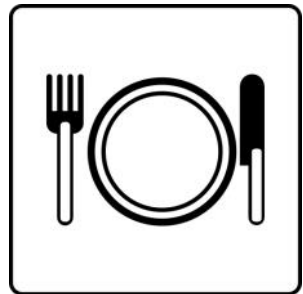
Come and say goodbye! A distinct possibility of
 cake and tea available....

BYE
 BYE

GAP Ladies Lunch

This lunch takes place on the last Wednesday of every month. **The next lunch will be on Wednesday 31st July.** Come and join ladies from St Lawrence, All Saints and St Mary's for a meal and chat.

The meal does need to be pre-booked. Phone Norma on 01420 84722 or 07814 204926.



You are not obliged to come every month, but please phone to cancel if you have been booked in and are unable to attend.

Norma Duke

Open the Book



Sarah, Abraham and baby Isaac.



The Open the Book team presented their last performance- for the moment. The children of Alton Infants presented them with cards and a box of chocolate biscuits.

Lynn Power

Can you help to Open the Book for our children?

Open the Book is an exciting storytelling project where Bible stories are shared with children in a way that is fun, interactive and memorable. As invited guests in school, our storytelling teams use the Open the Book programme to prepare and present a 10–15-minute scripted Bible story to a school assembly, involving the children as much as possible.

Through Open the Book assemblies, teams from GAP reach out to the primary schools of Alton. We receive a warm welcome from staff and children and are encouraged by the way the children listen, participate and reflect on what they hear. The experience is very rewarding.

In order to continue to deliver Open the Book in our schools, we need new members to join our team. The more members, the more fun, the more outreach and the more spreading of the load.

Our Open the Book teams have achieved much over the past decade and more. We now need to think about the future of this valuable work. If you feel you could help and would like to find out more, do look at the Open the Book website <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book>, talk to one of the clergy and/or contact Sue Burrows. Her email is susan.m.burrows@gmail.com. or phone 07811938237. Sue is coordinating the Open the Book team.

"A Bible story well told has the power to spark the imagination, inspire exploration, give hope, create a smile, teach important lessons and connect generations. "

Thanks, Sue



Volunteers Needed MHA

Do you have a spare hour in your week?

Your local Methodist Homes Community Scheme, Hampshire East, which offers social activities and services for the over-55s, needs volunteers!

*telephone befrienders *one-to-one befrienders *help with clubs and trips.

Help us make a difference to people's lives.

Please call Sally on 07973 853151 for information.

Attention all users of the church premises!

You may not realise that our church does NOT have a refuse collection - there is no room for outside dustbins.

Therefore it falls on all of us to help with rubbish disposal by taking home any rubbish you make!

This usually works quite well, however EHDC have tightened up on their collection of recycling rubbish. In future they will refuse to accept black bins with incorrect rubbish. Such bins will be labelled and not collected till the rubbish is reorganised!

Several of us take a sack of recycling home and I have personally had to remove unsuitable items before putting the paper etc. in my black bin. Please only put card and paper in these sacks along with plastic bottles.

NOTE we do not accept paper towels, small bits of paper, dirty cardboard or painted paper from craft projects. NOR plastic cups or shredded paper.

Paper which has already been recycled cannot be recycled again eg. banquet roll or paper napkins.

Black sacks can be found in the right hand big cupboard at the back of the foyer - this cupboard also has cleaning stuff which you can use when paint or baking material is dropped on carpets!

We are ALL responsible for the care of God's church not just the property committee.

Please clean up after your activities and take the rubbish home!



Christine Allan

ALL SAINTS HARD OF HEARING GROUP

ALL SAINTS CHURCH HALL

In June we celebrated Wimbledon Tennis fortnight with scones, strawberries and Pimms [well it looked similar!]. **On 23rd July** we will be entertaining ourselves with hopefully contributions from members reciting poetry and jokes and also telling us about their lives in Alton.

After our entertainment we will serve tea and biscuits [no Pimms or equivalent this month] and then comes the mega Raffle. So bring a prize as well as your £1 to enter!

Come along and make new friends! The afternoon starts at 2pm and finishes by 4pm. A small charge of £2 per meeting is made to cover costs.

We have some wonderful volunteers but really could do with one or two more people to help. So don't hold back – let me know if you can assist! Also contact me if you require any information about our meetings.

Contact: Annette Blackman Tel: 01420 543219

Email: ablackman4@googlemail.com

LIP READING

The last session of the year before the August break will be on **Tuesday 2nd July, 2pm, in All Saints Church hall**. Why not come along to find out more about this useful skill that is so helpful to the hearing impaired. You will be made most welcome! Led by Maggie Short, qualified lip Reading Tutor, followed by light refreshments, there is also time to continue to practice skills learned during the session in relaxed surroundings.

For further details contact kaddando@gmail.com

KNITTERS ANONYMOUS



Once again may I thank you all for the generous donations of beautifully made garments that continue to find their way to the group, many from anonymous knitters via the box in All Saints Church.

As Bliss, the charity for the premature babies, have recently updated some of their patterns I have also amended my pattern book, copies of which are available on request. We are reminded that the blankets should be minimum size 18inches x 18inches, with 24 x 24 preferred. The different style baby hats should fit on an orange please (an apple is too small, a grapefruit too big, orange just right!). Obviously the knits donated for the Ukraine can be any size, in fact jumpers to fit teenagers are particularly welcome at the moment.

The next meeting of the group is on Tuesday 16th July from 2.00pm in All Saints Church Hall. Why not come along to pick up some wool, find a new pattern or just have a cup of tea and a chat. All welcome!

For further details contact Kate 83514 kaddando@gmail.com

Loving God, help us to see the hidden treasure in our communities.

People who quietly go about doing wonderful things that make a difference, yet not seeking the limelight.

Our churches are made up of individuals who tirelessly try to show your love to others, and so bring hope and help to people in need.

Often these 'hidden treasures' are the catalyst behind a new project that encourages others to try something different.

We bring them to you in gratitude for their selfless giving of themselves, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

Amen.

Aileen Fox, local preacher, Central Norfolk Circuit

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Eco Corner

A Wonder Weed



The aviation industry is increasingly reliant on Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) which is already providing a way forward to reduce its carbon emissions without change to the aircraft itself.

SAF is a 'Biofuel' derived from food waste and other plant-derived material. However, food waste supplies are limited. Even if UK aviation were not to increase in the future, it has been estimated that half the country's farmland would need to be used to meet the demand. SAF is also some four times more expensive than kerosene.

However, the June 2024 edition of Aerospace Magazine contains an interesting article about a weed that could be a more effective source of biomass than currently used plants such as rapeseed or sunflower. Enter Carmelina Sativa. This is a weed which grows widely in the Northern Hemisphere, needs little water, grows well on poor soil and is shade tolerant. In other words, it is happy with soil that is too poor for other crops.

Carmelina has another trick up its sleeve. The carbon residue from the oil extraction process can be used as a soil improver, so effectively that it could make unusable soil good enough to grow food crops. That sounds like a win-win situation and might even turn out to be carbon negative when the advantages of soil improvement are properly assessed.

Currently, we are struggling towards net zero, a condition where we stabilize atmospheric carbon dioxide. Wouldn't it be fantastic if weeds like Carmelina could actually go further and reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide?

Nigel Hughes

Services in August

Sunday 4th	18th Sunday in Ordinary Time
	10.00am Rev Philip Simpkins - Holy Communion
Sunday 11th	19th Sunday in Ordinary Time
	10.00am Rev Howard Sharpe
Sunday 18th	20th Sunday in Ordinary Time
	10.00am Liz George
Sunday 25th	21st Sunday in Ordinary Time
	10.00am Rev Philip Simpkins - Holy Communion

ASK

Lord Jesus, we ask that you reveal to us those priceless treasures hidden in unlikely places, that we might see all you have freely given us.

SEEK

Creator God, we seek a revelation of the riches you have stored in secret, like diamond-light in the deepest darkness, that we might see the light by which we find you, even as you first found us.

KNOCK

All-Embracing Spirit, may we anticipate your generous welcome and hospitality, as we venture to knock on new, unfamiliar doors, and welcome all, as priceless treasures, in equal measure—the measure by which you graciously, abundantly welcome us.

Philip Gough, District Chair, Lancashire District

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Dates for your Diary

JULY

Tues 2	12 noon	Prayers at Noon
	2.00pm	Singing our Faith
	7.45pm	Church Family Committee
Sat 6	10.00-12.00	Anniversary Gift Day coffee morning
Tues 9	12.30pm	Lunch Club
Sat 13	2.00pm	CAMEO
Sun 14	6.30pm	Farewell service for Rev Gina Hoff at Cove Methodist Church (<i>see p15</i>)
Thurs 25	10.00→	Ladies @ Wetherspoons
Wed 31st	---	GAP Ladies Lunch

AUGUST

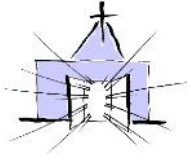
Thurs 29	10.00→	Ladies @ Wetherspoons
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SEPTEMBER

Sun 1	7.00pm	Circuit welcome service at The Spire, Farnham (<i>see p8</i>)
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Please look at articles in the Newsletter giving more information.

The September issue of the Newsletter should be available from Sunday 25th August.



Services at Alton in July 2024

For services in August, please see page 22.

Sunday 7th	Church Anniversary 10.00am Rev David Ashby - Holy Communion
Sunday 14th	Songs of Praise 10.00am Liz George
Sunday 21st	16th Sunday in Ordinary Time 10.00am Liz George
Sunday 28th	17th Sunday in Ordinary Time 10.00am Jennie Marlow

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 **September** issue of the “**Newsletter**” should reach the editor, Nancy Buck, by noon **Sunday 18th August** at the latest, please.

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