



Parish Profile Of St. Alban's with St. John's Offerton

We welcome you to the Parish Profile for St. Alban's with St. John's, Offerton

WHAT CAN WE OFFER?

- ✚ A lovely home in a friendly area.
- ✚ A welcoming congregation willing to participate in the running of the church
- ✚ A wish to be a more active church, keen to develop its Christian faith, its mission and its outreach.
- ✚ A prayerful and meaningful style of worship, valued in the church.
- ✚ An unlisted church building, that has an attached Galilee room with facilities, an adjacent parish hall and a very spacious vicarage.
- ✚ An openness and willingness to develop a vision for the future of the church and the wider Christian ministry.



Altar cross and reredos

WHAT WE ARE SEEKING – OUR IDEAL

- ✚ A priest of the modern/liberal Catholic tradition having deep regard for the sacraments.
- ✚ Someone able to see a way of fulfilling their commitments on reduced hours.
- ✚ Someone with a willingness to develop a shared vision, and enthusiasm to lead St. Alban's forward in Christian ministry, witness and service.
- ✚ A thoughtful style of preaching being open to a wide range of theological and liturgical understandings.
- ✚ A team player capable of uniting young and old in the congregation, who is approachable and a good communicator.
- ✚ Be able to relate to the wider church community, showing leadership and the ability to delegate and work collaboratively.
- ✚ Prayerfully consider the needs of the parish and help meet them in a creative and sensitive way.
- ✚ Have the imagination to find ways to grow our congregation and reach out to those in the parish including those that have little or no contact with the church, especially taking into consideration the new properties being built immediately opposite the church.
- ✚ Raise the profile of the church in the community and feel called to St. Alban's and St. John's.
- ✚ Be able to negotiate the process of change.



Easter Morning



A messy church family
being baptised

THE CHURCH CONTEXT



Summarised in the following pages are the main features of our churches. St. Alban's, with its distinctive style of worship is one of several churches which serve Stockport.

✚ The Victorian church lends itself to our Eucharistic centred worship and has been updated externally to include access for all.

✚ Welcome and hospitality are the hallmarks of St. Alban's.

✚ Worship is at the heart of our Christian witness

REGULAR WORSHIP

St. Alban's offers liturgical, Eucharistic-centred worship. We follow the Common Worship Calendars and Lectionaries, using the New Revised Standard version of the bible. Thoughtful and thought-provoking preaching is greatly appreciated by our congregation.

We provide a weekly booklet for all principal services to allow the service to be followed easily by all and to encourage the use of a variety of liturgy and music.

Worship is well ordered without being rigid, formal without being too "high", lively but also contemplative. We like to think of ourselves as Modern Catholic. We enjoy humour, fun and sincere prayer. There is a true sense of the church's year and seasons. Most of our hymns are taken from Complete Anglican Hymns Old & New, but we like to think of ourselves as open to new possibilities.



Our beautiful Italian designed
votive stand

Our major Sunday service is at 10.30am and the Gospel procession takes the Word down the centre of the church to be amongst the congregation.

On the first Sunday of the month we have an 8am said Communion service using the 1662 version of the Eucharist. Also on the first Sunday the 10.30am service is All Age worship. This service is also Eucharistic -based but geared towards the younger members. We invite the uniformed organisations into the church and they take an active part in the service, with prayers, readings and presentations.

We have a rota of chalice administrators, readers and intercessors whose input make the Eucharist varied and interesting.

Flowers are also paid for by the congregation and arranged for the major Festivals of the church. Members of the congregation also give money throughout the year for flowers in memory of loved ones.



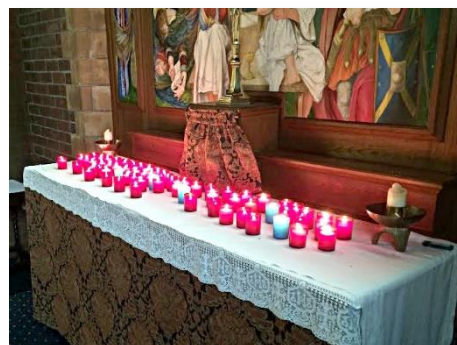
We were previously linked with St. Thomas' Hillgate, but the decision was made to create a town centre group consisting of three churches, St. Thomas', St. Luke's and St. Mary's, which has left St. Alban's on our own. We are not in a position financially to support a full time priest so the decision has been made to advertise for a 50% position. The congregation are aware of the circumstances and are also aware of the need to support the ministry in any way they can.

OCCASIONAL SERVICES

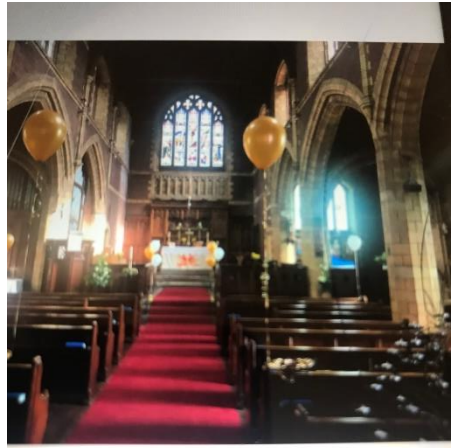
We traditionally have weekday services, although not currently during the vacancy. We do celebrate Red Letter Days, including Ash Wednesday with imposition of ashes, three hour vigil on Good Friday, and Ascension Day etc.

We often use candles during the services and a well-received service is the All Soul's celebration where we light candles in memory of loved ones.

We hold a Zoom Morning Prayer on Fridays at 9.30am and all those who are able join in.



All souls' service with candles
lit for loved ones



Our Christmas services are very popular with Midnight Mass and a 10am Christmas Day Eucharist.

We also hold a Christmas Eve Christingle service including an ad hoc nativity service.

There are two carol services in the church. One of these is the service organised by the uniformed organisations, which is lively and fun with input from all the uniformed groups. The church's carol service is the more usual service of nine lessons and carols.

Palm Sunday has the blessings of palms and crosses in the Parish Hall followed by a procession into the church for the Eucharist. Good Friday sees Stations of the Cross, Good Friday liturgy and an hour of poetry and music, last year focusing on the 7 sentences from the cross.



Easter Day starts with a dawn service with the lighting of the Paschal candle and this is followed at 10.30am by a joyful and happy Choral Eucharist.

Dawn service, First Fire of Easter



At St. Alban's, Advent and Lent courses have been held weekly through these seasons, and during Lent we have held an Evening service, led by the Wardens, and welcoming input from members of the congregation, inviting them to share a favourite piece of poetry, a person who inspired them, or an experience they wished to share.

Paschal Candle

Our daughter church, St. John's, ½mile away holds a Wednesday morning sung Eucharist at 10.30am. There is a small but faithful congregation attending this service.



St. John's church, built in the 1960's to the Brutalist design. This means a very high internal ceiling.

We have a separate baptism service on the 2nd Sunday of the month and this is usually booked three months in advance. Each child receives a special Baptism candle and certificate and they receive a handmade card on the first anniversary of their baptism, and invitations to join us for events and services taking place throughout the year. Baptisms are occasionally held during the morning service if requested.



font



Individual baptismal candle

Members of our congregation
recently being married – Judy and
Philip



St. Alban's is not the prettiest church on the outside to take the amazing pictures brides seem to require, but on the inside it is beautiful, and we do have marriage services, usually for church members or their families.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

PRAISE & PLAY

As well as the previously mentioned activities, (parade service, Christingle etc), prior to the pandemic we had a very active Praise & Play on Thursdays which was very well attended. It meets in the Lady Chapel and has a Bible story, and singing; the prams and trollies are parked in the body of the church and children sit on blankets. They are then allowed into our Galilee room where there are toys in abundance, toast and drinks, for the children and adults, and each week there is a simple craft activity with relevance to the story. We hope to reinstate this in the autumn.

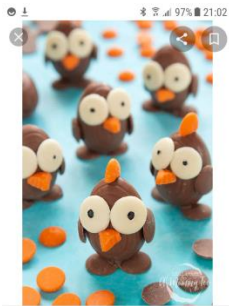


Pulpit cross
made by the
children

MESSY CHURCH



There is a monthly Messy Church which is well attended and appreciated. The children are provided with 9 activities, again pertinent to the theme for the day, and members of the congregation help on the activities. The day finishes with talk on the theme, singing, and mealtime. When the church activities were suspended due to COVID it was decided that we needed to keep the contact with the families who attend in some way, and it was decided that we should circulate activity bags to the children to keep our name in the household. Fifty bags were distributed to the families on a monthly basis, and when the Messy Church started again in June, 15 families attended, due to us keeping in touch.



OUR WELCOME

Our service time is 10.30am and prior to COVID we joined together in the Galilee room after the service for coffee and biscuits. We have started to do this again as the congregation felt safe doing so and this gives a good sense of fellowship within the church.

Our weekly coffee morning on a Friday morning attract members and visitors, where they can have quiet moment in church and light a candle, pick up any information and literature and buy second-hand books donated to the book stall.

THE CONGREGATION

St. Alban's is a happy place to worship. We believe in Faith, Fun and Friendship and although we are not a large congregation, we enjoy the fellowship we experience. Although we have a Parish of over 12,000 souls we usually average about 24 communicants weekly. This is substantially lower than pre Covid and slowly the numbers are increasing as people feel safe to return. Our congregation are mostly from the parish with a few from outside the boundaries attending for the liturgy, theology and welcome. Some of our members still feel that worship is on Sundays and that the other activities don't count as church, but those members are alone in this believe. However, families attend on the Parade services on the first Sunday of the month and it is good to see old and young worshipping together.



Church Parade

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

There are two experienced church wardens in office, and a rota for Sides persons to assist at the services. They are responsible for welcoming, handing out the appropriate books, and clearing up after the service. There is also a rota for readers, intercessors, and chalice assistants, as well as a rota for tea and coffee makers. We have a lady who keeps our linen spotless, and we have two paid employees at the moment an administrator and a cleaner.



PASTORAL CARE AND OUTREACH

We are conscious of our image as a Christian Community in Offerton. To attempt to do our part in the community:

- ✚ We have a small pastoral care team who visit the elderly and housebound and take communion when requested.
- ✚ We have a prayer wall in church and an intercession list, where people can put names of people they know to be ill, and their names are added to our intercessions during the service. The prayer wall is there for anyone to write a prayer and attach it to the wall.
- ✚ At our Harvest Festival the congregation and the uniformed organisations, are encouraged to bring consumables which we take to the “Wellspring” kitchen, our homeless shelter in Stockport. Two members of our congregation are volunteers at this shelter.
- ✚ We donate the harvest produce to the local food bank on alternate years, alternating between them and the Wellspring.
- ✚ Two local schools did attend church twice a year prior to Covid for the Christmas and Easter experience.
- ✚ We have a monthly magazine which is delivered to members of the Parish. We are particularly conscious of the housebound and make sure they receive the publication to help them keep in touch.
- ✚ We hold a Macmillan coffee morning each year to which all are invited, and we have several charity events throughout the year, with monies being donated to the various charities.



Stockport Food Bank

At present we do not have a large leadership team, and we would be keen to:

- ✚ Expand this team for all to be involved
- ✚ Develop a larger team able to expand and develop our mission and outreach.
- ✚ Focus on the needs of the elderly, sick and those in residential homes.
- ✚ Embrace all the schools in our area, visiting them and them visiting us.

- ✚ Hold more fund-raising events to swell the coffers.

SOME STATISTICS

Parish Size	1200
Weekly attendance	26 adults 4 children
Number on electoral roll	74
Baptisms	14
Confirmation candidates this year	0
Weddings last year	1
Funerals in church last year	3
Funerals at crematorium last year	8

LOOKING FORWARD

We see our main needs as follows:

- ✚ To help our worship to become more accessible to the community, but to continue our traditions
- ✚ To reconnect to young adults and teenagers i.e. film café, cooking with faith, and youth club
- ✚ To build stronger links with people on the fringes of the church e.g. Baptism families.
- ✚ To establish house groups/fellowship groups
- ✚ To offer Alpha courses or equivalent to the community
- ✚ To encourage lay involvement hopefully leading to Readers and other licensed ministry
- ✚ To develop a baptism and wedding preparation and follow-up
- ✚ To grow our ecumenical relations

St. Alban's has been of the Catholic Tradition since 1922 and hopes to continue in that mode. Prior to COVID the churches had growth, especially in the area of outreach and mission to the children and young people but many activities had to be suspended including Praise and Play, Storytime service, Sunday group during the service and Messy Church. We hope that these can be reinstated, if not in total, then to a lesser extent.



Praise and Play Nativity



Lady Chapel Art Work. Left to right St. John, Our Lady, Our Lord and St. Alban

The Lady Chapel, is at the right hand side of the church. A local artist was commissioned to produce a mural on the panels in this chapel which has brightened the room considerably. It was previously very dark panelling and with the paintings and an all season's altar frontal it is now a lovely place to hold small services, study groups etc. The reserved sacrament is housed in the Lady Chapel, and we have recently had a donation enabling us to buy a substantial size statue of Our Lady.

A Sixsmith organ was installed in the chancel in place of the old one, and the pipes mounted on a platform at the west end of the church. It was dedicated in 1986. Unfortunately, the foot pedals stopped working and is temporarily broken but we have a method, where it can be used on an ad hoc basis.

We have a small kitchen in the Galilee room which is used by the church as a tea bar. The Galilee is hired out to Slimming World two days a week and Women's Institute once a month. We have a very substantial kitchen and all facilities in the Parish Hall. This is used in the evenings by Yoga, Zumba, Karate, and Indoor bowling, The rental is a very valuable source of income, but is available during the day at the moment. Our messy church takes place in this space once a month.

Most of the members of the congregation belong to the parish as well as the church. Few travel from outside the parish and we give a welcome to all.



Parish Hall

FINANCE

Our financial situation provides challenges. We had to use our business shares to pay for the refurbishment of the outside of the church. We rely heavily, as a church, on the income from the lettings of our Hall and two churches. At our annual stewardship Sunday the principles of Christian stewardship and the need to give generously are highlighted. Many of our congregation are elderly, living on a fixed income and they find the subject of giving difficult.

Due to COVID we have been unable to hold fund raising events which do bring in much needed income. We plan to reinstate these and the congregation will come and help to support these.



Easter Garden



The usual St. Alban's fun day (left) is really fun but we need spiritual leadership to increase regular giving so that it equates to regular outgoings and we hope to reinstate the fun day in 2023. It is held on the weekend of the Patronal Festival

Church showing the Galilee room



THE CHURCH AND WIDER COMMUNITY

Our facilities are used by several groups which are not necessarily related to the Church. As well as forming a substantial financial help, they also play an important part of our outreach.

- We have an affiliated Scout and Guide Group which has a Guide company, a Scout troop, two Cub packs, a Brownie pack, a Rainbow pack and two Beaver colonies. They attend monthly All age worship on 1st Sunday of the month, and each section take it in turn to read, intercede and give a short presentation. The Vicar attends their meetings to help and guide the presentation.
- Slimming world use our Galilee Room twice a week and enjoy the facilities.
- We have a very successful indoor bowling club, who use our Parish Hall at least twice a week in the winter months. There are a few members of our congregation who are also members of the bowling club and we receive feedback of their successes.
- The hall is used for other activities e.g. Zumba, Pilates etc. parties and musical events.
- There are a number of other churches in the area, Methodist, and Roman Catholic, and although we do have some interaction with them, this could be developed further.



LOOKING FORWARD

We need leadership to help us to:

- ✚ Redevelop church activities following the Covid pandemic
- ✚ Have further involvement with the children of the uniformed organisations.
- ✚ Offer closer involvement in our church life to those people that we have a connection with but who do not come into St. Alban's.
- ✚ Seek out a wider vision of Christian mission and service within our local community.
- ✚ Engage more fully with people on Social media.

LIVING IN OFFERTON



THE VICARAGE

The vicarage was built in the 1930's and is a lovely detached building in large grounds. It has six bedrooms, one of which is en-suite and a family bathroom with separate toilet.

There is a cloakroom downstairs with toilet and handwashing facilities. On the first floor there are two large storage rooms and a loft entrance. The hall, stairs and landing are large and spacious and the stairs are very grand. Downstairs there is a spacious study, a morning room, a large lounge, a dining room, kitchen and two pantries.

There is also a brick-built garage and two brick outside storage rooms, one of which holds the central heating boiler.

SCHOOLS

There are four junior schools in the parish as well as a Roman Catholic Junior school.

There is one Senior school for children with learning difficulties and an aided Nursery school.

There are several private nurseries in the area. There is a senior school and a private school on the outskirts of Offerton, being in neighbouring parishes.



STOCKPORT

Stockport is an historic town 7 miles south of Manchester, the town centre being approximately 2 miles from Offerton. It has a covered market and a large, partly covered shopping centre with all the usual businesses. It is a growing metropolitan town, with full entertainment facilities

Stockport has an NHS hospital, outside our parish but in very close proximity, with several private Hospitals nearby.

Stockport is very well situated for train and motorway links, the M60 orbital road and the A6 road to London both being only a few minutes away. Manchester Airport is only 5 miles away. The viaduct is one of the features of the town carrying the main line trains over the River Mersey and is a very visible landmark.

There are two very spacious parks in Offerton, Woodbank Park and Vernon Park. Vernon park has a bowling green and café facilities, and both are lovely green spaces.

Children's Harvest banner

