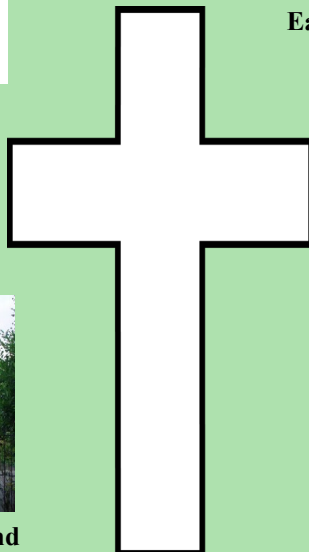




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# THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

## December 2020

Dear All,

I'm writing this the day we found out [Thursday November 26<sup>th</sup>] that the North East has been put into Tier 3 – the strictest version of the government's Covid restrictions. I'm thinking of you with love as the pandemic drags on, and wish you the very best for Christmas and the New Year.

One of the things I'm currently doing to keep spiritually tanked up is to spend ten minutes each day reading John's Gospel [ultra-slow]. I then spend another ten minutes quietly sitting with God and what I've read.

Jean had already asked me to write this piece for 'Church Views' before I sat down today and read this...

*Jesus cried out: those who believe in me do not believe in me, but in the one who sent me. And the one who sees me sees the one who sent me. I have come as a light into the world, so that those who believe in me need not remain in the darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I will not judge them. I did not come to judge the world, but so that I might save the world. [John 12.44-47]*

There is so much in these words! Especially as we approach this Covid Christmas of all Christmases...

**The one who sees me sees the one who sent me.** This is absolute dynamite. Jesus is saying that if we look at him, we see God. Jesus is a self-portrait of God. When eternal God steps into human history, he looks like Jesus. And as we trace the Christmas story we will see Jesus become a defenceless baby. We will see him shut out at his birth, because there is no room. We will see him shortly become a refugee, his parents fleeing because they fear human authorities abusing their power. This is our Holy God. God is 'Immanuel' – God with us. God knows what you are going through in this time of pandemic. He stands with you.

**I have come as a light into the world...** And, by Christ, how this world needs the light of Jesus. We've had to endure the spectacle of the so-called 'Leader of the Free World' petulantly clinging onto power despite losing an election by five million votes. Closer to home our own government is making plans to cut the aid budget, at the very time when the UK ought to be pulling with the most vulnerable. In Ethiopia, scores of innocent civilians have been murdered in the latest outbreak of dark violence to scar this planet.

In all of this, Jesus is 'light'. He lights up the way. He shows us how to live... **so that those who believe in me need not remain in the darkness.** This Christmas, let us turn away from the darkness of fear to the light of trust. From the darkness of resentment to the light of true forgiveness. From the darkness of hatred to the light of love. Next time you walk down a street and see pretty Christmas lights, let them be a memory-prompt of these words of Jesus: **I have come as a light into the world.**

**I did not come to judge the world, but so that I might save the world.** The name 'Jesus' is a code-name. It means 'God to the rescue'. That's why the angel says 'call him Jesus *because* he will save his people from their sins'. Christians believe that, ultimately, Jesus did that on the cross. He prayed for the soldiers nailing him to it. And as he hung on it, *he bore our sins* as Peter says in his letter. Crucified Jesus killed my sin stone dead. The baby lying in the manger has come to die. That's why the third Wise Man gives him myrrh – a spice for burial.

So Happy Christmas. Faith in Jesus doesn't waft us off into some sentimental never-never land. On the contrary, faith is about finding God in real lives – lockdown, self-isolation, long-Covid and social distancing. It is here that we find Immanuel – the with-us God.

With love, especially to our Roman Catholic and Methodist sisters and brothers,

Tim Mayfield.

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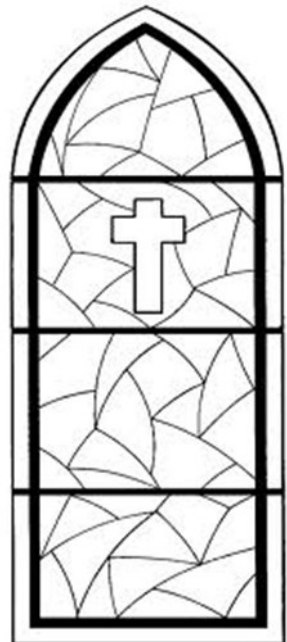
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## COMMUNITY NEWS

### Forthcoming events

The Parish of Earsdon and Backworth organises a number of social events throughout the year to raise funds and encourage fellowship. As you know, we are unable to carry out any events during these Covid 19 pandemic restrictions.



### How to impress the cat this Christmas

If you are going to spend Christmas in a house with a resident cat, it may be worth knowing how to win its favour on the big day.

Recent research at Sussex University has found that humans become more attractive to a cat when they slowly blink at it, and mimic what is known as a 'cat smile.'

Cats are more likely to slow-blink at their owners after their owners have slow-blinked at them. Cats are also more likely to approach an outstretched hand after a person has slow-blinked the cat.

As one professor said, this is something 'you can try yourself with your own cat at home, or with cats you meet in the street. It's a great way of enhancing the bond you have with cats.' (Presuming you want such a bond!)

'Try narrowing your eyes at them as you would in a relaxed smile, followed by closing your eyes for a couple of seconds. You should find they respond to you in the same way. You might even start a sort-of conversation.'







Wishing all our readers and advertisers  
A Very Happy Christmas and a great 2021,  
and many thanks for your support!

We are working towards printing out paper copies of Church Views magazine again, and having some delivered as before. I hope this can resume for January 2021, but in the meantime, please enjoy the on-line versions that have continued during the whole of these Coronavirus constraints. *Jean .*

On-line magazines at:

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Then click on Monthly Newsletter which is down the left-hand side, then again, click on Monthly Newsletter.



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## Real Chalk Board Notice ...



\*\*\*

## God's Plan for aging ...

So that seniors get enough exercise:

In His Wisdom God decreed that seniors become forgetful so they would have to search for their glasses, keys and other things thus doing more walking. And God looked down and saw that it was good.

Then God saw there was another need. In His Wisdom He made seniors lose coordination so they would drop things requiring them to bend, reach & stretch. And God looked down and saw that it was good.

Then God considered the function of bladders and decided seniors would have additional calls of nature requiring more trips to the bathroom, thus providing more exercise.

God looked down and saw that it was good.

So if you find as you age, you are getting up and down more, remember it's God's will. It is all in your best interest even though you mutter under your breath.

# Smile-lines

## Lockdown Information

*On the best available scientific advice the government has indicated that when swimming pools re-open in January, to accommodate social distancing, there will be no water in lanes one, three or five.*

*Thank you Gerry Latimer!*

\*\*\*

*And this was sent in by Gillian France ...*

CORONA-19 PROTECTION FOR CLERGY 🙏🤒



# BITS 'N' PIECES

It was...

400 years ago, on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1620 that the first landing party from the British ship Mayflower arrived at what would become Plymouth Colony (now Plymouth Massachusetts). They began building houses there two days later.

250 years ago, on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1770 that Ludwig van Beethoven, German composer and pianist was born.

80 years ago, on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1940 that Germany dropped thousands of incendiary bombs on London, causing the worst fire damage since the Great Fire of London in 1666. About 200 people were killed.

65 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1955 that African American civil rights activist Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man in

Montgomery, Alabama, violating the city's racial segregation laws. This incident led to the birth of the modern American civil rights movement.

60 years ago, on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1960 that the first episode of the television soap opera Coronation Street was broadcast in the UK.

40 years ago, on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1980 that John Lennon, rock musician and peace activist and a member of the Beatles, was shot dead, aged 40, outside his New York City apartment by Mark Chapman, a deranged fan.

30 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1990 that British and French construction workers on the Channel Tunnel broke through the last wall of rock separating the two halves, and Britain and France were linked for the

first time in thousands of years.

25 years ago, on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1995 that the Brixton riot took place in south London. Hundreds of youths rioted on the streets following the death of a black man in police custody.

20 years ago, on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2000 that George W Bush finally claimed the US presidency, 36 days after the election was held, following a legal battle over disputed votes in Florida.

15 years ago, on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2005 that the Civil Partnership Act came into effect in the UK. The first civil partnership under the act was formed in Belfast, that same day. The first in England and Wales were on 21<sup>st</sup> December.



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Welcome to “**The Secret Life of St Alban’s and St John’s Folk**”.  
This month we have been talking with Liz Rogerson, from  
St. Alban’s church.

**1) Where were you born?**

At Princess Mary Maternity Hospital in Newcastle, although my family home was in South Shields, where I lived until my early twenties.

**2) What do you do during the week, when you’re not at church?**

I’ve been retired for two years now and am just enjoying the fact that I don’t have to do anything! I have discovered that I really enjoy gardening and just to keep my brain active, have become a trustee of a local charity.

**3) Surprise us with one of your hobbies, or something we may not know about you**

Since retiring I have thought that I should take up a new hobby but haven’t found anything to inspire me yet - so any suggestions welcome! As for something you might not know... I’m a huge Bruce Springsteen fan - life in lockdown was made somewhat more bearable by the release of his new album, but sadly no world tour in the offing at the moment!

**4) What’s your favourite film?**

I think my favourite film is “Local Hero”; I don’t want to be scared out of my wits for entertainment so this just about fits the bill! Plus it is set in some of the most fabulous scenery on the west coast of Scotland which we enjoyed on so many family holidays when the children were young.

**5) What’s your least favourite food?**

I love my food so this is difficult - although I do remember ordering a seafood pasta and my dismay when I was faced with several baby octopus nestled in the tagliatelle! I don’t like anything that still has eyes attached - if I had to catch my food I’d definitely be vegetarian!

**6) Tell us something that’s on your bucket list**

I know that bucket lists usually involve exotic locations and there are lots of places in the world I would love to visit, but the thing that springs to mind is to climb Cheviot - just because I’ve never done it and it’s in our backyard!

**7) In what ways has everyday life changed for you since the Coronavirus started?**

I've spent a lot more time exploring the local area and appreciating what we have on our doorstep, but have really missed being able to get together with family and friends, not just for big celebrations, but those times when you would just call on friends and share a coffee. Now we have to stop and think whether it's within the rules or not!

**8) Tell us something you plan to do when lockdown is fully over**

Hold a family celebration for all those occasions where we haven't been able to get together - with lots of hugging!

**9) Sum up what being a Christian/being part of the church family means to you**

I've been part of this particular church family now for 29 years; I'm not sure where all those years have gone but I still remember the lovely welcome I received back then. The friendship and support that the church family in St Alban's and St John's have not only for each other, but to people in the wider community demonstrate to me one of the most important aspects of being a Christian.

**10) Do you have any prayer requests we can ask the magazine readers to pray for?**

If I can turn this question around I would like to thank everyone for their prayers for my brother when he was in hospital with coronavirus recently; I very much appreciated the care and concern shown by everyone. So my prayer would be one of thanks for his recovery - and for the tireless dedication of hospital staff and carers.

**11) Do you have a favourite verse/book of the Bible?**

My father introduced me to the wonderful language of Chapter 38 in the Book of Job where God calls out of the whirlwind: "In all your life have you ever called up the dawn or shown the morning its place? "; simple but so powerful and perhaps a timely reminder to those in power in our world today!

**12) Do you have a favourite phrase, quotation or saying?**

At the moment it has to be 'Don't worry about things you can't change'.

## CHURCH VIEWS FOR DECEMBER 2020 FROM THE PARISH OF OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA



The roses in flower may be fewer at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, but they continue to add their own welcome. Just as we began to enjoy a kind of normal worship, at least with Baptisms and Requiem Masses, the lockdown brought it to a close. In November the church was open only for private prayer on Monday mornings.

But before the lockdown closure there was time to enjoy the remaining beauty of the very late autumn by harvesting some of the glorious still-flowering roses. When the church was only open for private prayer, what better reminder for us to offer a prayer of thanks for the beautiful world we have been given.



Other parts of the grounds continue to delight with their bright splashes of early winter colour, offering their own greeting to the changing seasons. The grounds always celebrate their certainty of the next season, a celebration of continuing life. We too look forward in the certainty of brighter days.



## Masses after Lockdown

During the November lock-down, no public Masses could be celebrated in the Parish, apart from Requiem Masses. Daily Masses were streamed and we look forward to December when we will be able once again to enjoy socially distanced worship with ‘track and trace’.



## Food Bank Reverse Christmas Calendar

The food bank have suggested that, in the run up to Christmas, people might like to donate one item each day for twenty four days to help those who are most in need this year. Our Parish has always been particularly generous. We started collecting on Monday 15th November so we will finish on Tuesday 8th December, a very fitting feast day!

The food bank collection point at Immaculate Heart of Mary church is open each Monday morning between 10am and 12 noon, and the church itself is open for private prayer at those times.

## Preparing for Christmas



*Thank you Ali Griffiths, for sending these pictures from St Alban's & St John's group visiting members of the congregation who are currently unable to attend.*

“Here are a few shots from the walkabout I attended today. (11 November 2020). Pat Hugman arranged it all and I went along in my role as Community Champion to make sure all guidelines were stuck to.”





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Sent in by Dianne Morgan :

I couldn't resist these pics as I was walking home after church this morning.... I guess Sue has been creative for Halloween. I thought it was just so lovely and it brought a happy smile to my face. I resisted the calories!



"Five pumpkins bright  
and jolly  
Climb the steps and take  
a lolly !  
In the darkness, lanterns  
shine  
Take some buttons off the  
line !"



# Earsdon Methodist Church

Currently the Methodist Church remains closed for worship. In February 2021 the Trustees will again look at the right time to reopen for worship bearing in mind the congregation and what is happening within the world because of the Pandemic.

Worship of course continues within our people's lives as they seek to grow in faith and understanding of the God of us all. The Methodist Circuit continues to offer online worship through its face book page and on Youtube. <https://www.facebook.com/NSWBMC>

I want to express our deep thanks to all those who support our folk during this time, bringing comfort to those who are self-isolating, or being kept at home or in care homes for other reasons.

This year Christmas will be different for people at many levels, as we still are unclear of what may or may not happen regarding the mixing together of family at Christmas. We wait and see, with expectant hope knowing it is beyond our control. This reminds me very much of the season leading up to Christmas, Advent. A time given over for the preparation of ourselves for the coming of God incarnate. The God of love to us all and finding expression in and through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory now and for ever.

With the announcement today (10<sup>th</sup> November) that a potential vaccine could be made available before the end of this year, there is as some put it, light at the end of a tunnel. May I remind you of the light at Christmas, where the word became flesh and dwelt amongst us. As Charles Wesley put it in one of our great Christmas carols,

2 Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a Virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see:  
hail, the incarnate Deity,  
pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark, the herald-angels sing  
glory to the new-born King.

3 Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace:  
hail, the Sun of Righteousness.  
Light and life to all he brings,  
risen with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
born that man no more may die,  
born to raise the sons of earth,  
born to give them second birth.  
Hark, the herald-angels sing  
glory to the new-born King.

Let us give thanks to all those helping us through these hard times, particularly to those whom we often forget. Our Shop workers, bin-men, teachers, professional carers, the NHS and so many more who have sacrificially given of their time to enable people to feel a part of community.

A Happy Christmas and Blessed New Year to you all.

Rev John Mason

Last month, Remembrance Sunday was not the same at all. Due to the lockdown restrictions no services were allowed at War Memorials or in Churches. However, something very encouraging happened in Earsdon. One of our senior members and former Senior Steward, Norman Bloomfield , decided to go along to the Earsdon War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday and lay our wreath at 11.00 a.m. as a mark of respect. He expected to spend the two minutes silence alone and say a silent prayer before returning home. However, Norman tells that when he got there, he was met with a group of about 40 other people, all socially distanced, with the same idea. He explains that it was a very moving tribute and the silence seemed doubly impressive.

## Advent

Along with many other Churches, our usual practice at Advent Sunday morning services is to have an Advent ring with four red candles and a central white candle, one lit each week accompanied by a Bible reading and a prayer appropriate to the day. This guides us through Advent and leads right up to Christmas day itself. Of course, as our church will not be open for worship, this is not possible this year for us. However, each member of our congregation has been given an Advent Service of Compline, along with a small candle which they are invited to use at home if they so wish.

In some traditions and Orders of the Church, the day was divided into sections, each having its own time for prayer and worship and each with its own liturgy. Compline is the term used for the prayers at the closing of the day. Our service is not altogether the same pattern as its forerunners, and language used is more current than some of the older versions. It has a different emphasis to the short morning liturgy we are used to but is hoped to be some guide for us all in this season, and help us to be linked with each other and our God.

\*\*\*\*\*

Whilst we are not meeting in our Church building, we keep in close contact via the telephone. In fact, some of the conversations we have are longer than those we would have on a Sunday. So there is some advantage in not having to hurry home to tend to the meat or the rice pudding in the oven ! Our warmest wishes go to all in our sister churches.

Wes Blakey.

# St. Alban's and St. John's

## Diary Page for December 2020

Sunday	6th	<b><u>Second Sunday of Advent</u></b>		
		8.30am	Holy Eucharist	St John's
		10.00am	Holy Eucharist	St Alban's
		6.00pm	Evening Worship for Advent	ZOOM
Sunday	13th	<b><u>Third Sunday of Advent</u></b>		
		8.30am	Holy Eucharist	St John's
		10.00am	Holy Eucharist	St Alban's
		6.00pm	Evening Worship for Advent	ZOOM
Sunday	20th	<b><u>Fourth Sunday of Advent</u></b>		
		8.30am	Holy Eucharist	St John's
		10.00am	Holy Eucharist	St Alban's
		6.00pm	Carols by Candlelight	ZOOM
Tuesday	22nd	<b><u>Journey to the Crib</u></b>		
			St Alban's open for timed visits between 10.00am and 6.00pm. - <i>Booking essential *</i>	St Alban's
Thursday	24th	<b><u>Christmas Eve</u></b>		
		11.30pm	Midnight Mass - <i>Booking essential. *</i>	St Alban's
Friday	25th	<b><u>Christmas Day</u></b>		
		8.30am	Christian Communion	St John's
		10.00am	Christian Communion – <i>Booking essential *</i>	St Alban's
Sunday	27th	<b><u>First Sunday of Christmas</u></b>		
		8.30am	Holy Eucharist	St John's
		10.00am	Holy Eucharist	St Alban's

\* Where booking is essential, please contact Rev Tim Mayfield 07414 601 351  
Or email [Tim.Mayfield@btinternet.com](mailto:Tim.Mayfield@btinternet.com)



# St. Alban's and St. John's



## Sunday Gospel Readings for December 2020 :

6th

Mark 1. 1 - 8

13th

John 1. 6 -8, 19 -28

20th

Luke 1. 26 -28

27th

Luke 2. 15 -21



\*\*\*\*\*  
\* If you have any suggestions, comments or requests  
\* regarding the magazine, or for anyone thinking of  
\* sending in their contribution for publication, please  
\* email it to **magazine@StAlbansEarsdon.org.uk**  
\* or call **Jean** on **0191 2377273**.  
\*\*\*\*\*



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					4	5		2
				8				3
	7		8			9		
		2				6		
		3			2		8	
4				5				
1		6	3					
				4			9	7



Please note - all material for next month's magazine (January 2021) will need to be in before Wednesday 23rd December 2020. Thank you, *Jean*.

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## Marti's Musings 81

Here we are in another lockdown! Nothing has really changed here; mum is still going to work so I don't see her during the day. However, I am enjoying seeing everyone on zoom again and listening to the service. Sue does some beautiful PowerPoints to go with the service and I enjoy looking at the pictures. The hymns are lovely to hear on a Sunday, but I have been missing hearing St Albans' choir rehearsing carols for Christmas. On every morning walk I have noticed the Christmas trees in windows increasing in number! They do look so pretty and I am trying to persuade mum to put ours up earlier. She's not having any of it and won't put them up until December. I assume there will be no Posada this year unless Mary and Joseph go into quarantine between home visits. They could start their travels early I guess! What a strange year this has been. I will be adding my Christmas greetings to our Parish card, but for now, I wish you all a joyous and blessed Christmas.

Lots of love

Marti xxx



# WORDSEARCH

## December 2020

### Silent Night

This much-loved carol comes from Austria, where it was first sung as *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht* on Christmas Eve, 1818. It was written by Father Joseph Mohr, a young priest at St Nicholas parish church, in the village of Oberndorf bei Salzburg. As Christmas 1818 approached, he asked the local schoolmaster, Franz Xaver Gruber, to compose a melody for his carol. Gruber was organist in the nearby village of Arnsdorf, and so was happy to oblige. On Christmas Eve they presented the carol to the church during the midnight mass. The carol went on to become loved world-wide; and the version sung by Bing Crosby is the third best-selling single of all time.

Silent  
Night  
Loved  
Carol  
Austria  
First  
Sung  
Stille  
Nacht  
Heilige

Mass  
Melody  
Single  
Bing  
Version  
Third

Christmas  
Eve  
Father  
Joseph  
Mohr

Young  
Priest  
Organist  
Midnight



# Church Contacts

## Earsdon Methodists:

### *Minister*

Rev'd John Mason, 61 Ingleside Road, North Shields NE29 9PB. Tel: 2908745

Email [jmason4468@gmail.com](mailto:jmason4468@gmail.com)

### *Church Council Secretary*

Mrs. A. Blakey, 14 Hesleyside Road, Whitley Bay, NE25 9HB. Tel:251 9813

### *Church Treasurer*

Mr Ian Nicholson, 28 Huntly Road, Whitley Bay, NE25 9UR. Tel: 252 9564

### *Church Stewards*

Mrs S Bowen 7 Woodside, Prudhoe, NE42 5PH. Tel: 01661 835811

Mrs B Henderson 46 Kingston Drive, Whitley Bay, NE26 1JJ. Tel: 291 3678

## St. Alban's Earsdon:

### *Vicar*

Rev'd. Tim Mayfield, 5 Front Street, Earsdon, Whitley Bay NE25 9JU

Tel: 07414 601 351

### *Reader*

Edward Newton, 10 Hesleyside Rd., South Wellfield, Whitley Bay , NE25 9HB

Tel: 2528977

### *Church wardens*

Mr R Swindells 81 St. Mary's Avenue, Whitley Bay, NE26 3TS. Tel:252 3919

Mr Ali Griffiths, 144 John St, Cullercoats, NE30 4PJ, Mobile: 0772 9805957

Tel : 2909967.

### *PCC Secretary*

Vacant

### *PCC Treasurer*

For all treasury enquiries, please contact the vicar.



## St. John's Backworth:

### *Vicar*

Rev'd. Tim Mayfield, 5 Front Street, Earsdon, Whitley Bay NE25 9JU

Tel: 07414 601 351

### *Reader*

Edward Newton 10 Hesleyside Rd., South Wellfield, Whitley Bay NE25 9HB

Tel: 2528977

### *Assistant Church warden*

Mrs M Oliver 10 Melrose Avenue, Backworth, Newcastle NE27 0JD Tel: 268 4334

### *Treasurer*

Mrs M Oliver 10 Melrose Avenue, Backworth, Newcastle NE27 0JD Tel: 268 4334

## Our Lady, Star of the Sea :

Mgr. Andrew Faley Tel: 252 8021

Parish Office Tel: 252 7066- open on Weds, Thursdays, & Fridays, 10am to 1pm.

Website: [www.stalbansearsdon.co.uk](http://www.stalbansearsdon.co.uk)

Church Views magazine email: [magazine@stalbansearsdon.org.uk](mailto:magazine@stalbansearsdon.org.uk)