

## St John's Church, Alsagers Bank celebrates 100 years

The Anglican Church at Alsagers Bank has been in the village for well over one hundred years. It is however 100 years since the building that is now on the site was actually built, replacing a smaller structure.

To celebrate the occasion, a service was held on the afternoon of the 31st July 2011, almost exactly 100 years after the first service held in the new building on Sunday 30th July 1911. Among the special guests invited were the Mayor of Newcastle-under-Lyme, Councillor Trevor Hambleton and his wife, Sandra. Friends from business and other local churches were welcomed together with those who have attended or served the church over the years.

The church was full for the occasion at which the Rt. Rev. Geoff Annas, the Bishop of Stafford spoke. Afterwards everyone was welcomed to refreshments in the church hall. A spectacular cake in the shape of the church was made by Mrs. Donna Wilcox. As they say, "A good time was had by all."

St John's Church is gaining new members and will gladly welcome many more, especially if you are interested in exploring the significance and relevance of Jesus Christ today. Baptism and Marriage enquiries are welcome. Please contact Peter Davies - 720392.

Below is a short history of the church.

The Heathcote family have in the past had a significant role in Alsagers Bank and the church building.

**1822** Richard Heathcote inherited the Apedale Estate from his father, Sir John Heathcote. He built a new hall,



partly on the site of the old medieval hall-which had been surrounded by a moat.

**1826** The new hall was ready and he brought his young family to live in Apedale. He was also elected M.P. for Coventry.

**1839** He founded, with help from the Church of England National Society, the school at Alsagers Bank.

**1846** Alsagers Bank was part of the Chesterton Parish. The distance of Alsagers Bank from a place where services were performed led to the licensing of St. John's Church. The Schoolroom was used for Sunday Services and Sunday School was the responsibility of the Chesterton incumbent.

**1850** After Richard's death, his son, John ruled the estate for 20 years. He had no children, so his sister's son, Justinian Heathcote Edwards inherited the estate in 1869. He changed his

name to Edwards-Heathcote.

**1851** Justinian and his wife built the first Church building and on the 30th November, at the first service Justinian's second son was baptised.

**1911** The church was largely rebuilt and enlarged.

**1932** St. John's became the centre of the new Parish of Alsagers Bank and had its own vicar. The brick building that we know today is the result of the enlargement in 1911. Almost exactly 100 years later the church is still here and active in its service of the community.

Recently St. John's has shared its minister with other churches, St. Luke's in Silverdale and St. Mary's in Knutton. Today, the Rev. Peter Davies, the vicar of Audley, has responsibility for the mission of the church. Helping him are a team of lay workers at St. John's and the Rev. Kip Chelashaw.