

The Grapevine

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ST LAURENCE CHURCH ALVECHURCH



“When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.” – Matthew 2:10

DECEMBER 2020

Online at www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org/monthly-magazine

St Laurence Church Alvechurch

Please see page 10 for our proposed services details.
Our usual services, activities and groups remain suspended because of
the pandemic.

Please consult our website (www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org) for any
update on the situation.

We hope that you can join us for our weekly recorded services online
- please see page 10 for more details: the link to our YouTube channel
is on the homepage of our website (www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org).

GROUPS (suspended as explained above)

Sunday Club - Sundays during term time 9.30am Church & Ark

Choir - Thursdays at 7.45pm in Church (445 3569)

Bellringers - Sundays at 10.45am
Tuesday Practice at 7.30pm (01527 64077)

Ark Tots and Toddlers - Thursdays 9.30am to 11.10am in The Ark
Tiny Tots Service - 10.45am 4th Thursday of the month
(sarah100work@gmail.com)

Home Group - Thursdays 7.30pm at the Coach House (445 2547)

THE ARK

Enquiries to Ian Price 0121 447 7955 (admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk)

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Martin Allen writes...

some weeds which grew by the roadside and miraculously their tips went red. So she had leaves to lay on the crib as a gift to the Christ Child. I'm not sure how true it is but it's a nice story.

I wonder what Christmas traditions you have?? We probably have a number in common; I have one connected to my workplace, where I buy plants for our reception area and my room. I buy Poinsettias (the large green and red leaved things). Sadly, they tend to survive the Christmas season and then die, which makes me feel bad.

This has made me think about the season we are in and our approach to Christmas. God can give new life to dry, dead leaves and plants and can make them thrive and grow. However, he needs them to have the right feed, right conditions and environment. As it is with leaves, so it is with us.

Back in 2018 I went shopping for the "traditional" plants. Oddly enough that year the Poinsettia in my room didn't die and despite over watering and neglect, survived till about May and then died - or so I thought. Incredibly, it revived in June and grew new green shoots - and then really died in July. I didn't have the heart to compost it so left it in my room where it declined to regrow. A number of my patients noticed - so much so that some drew the connection between doctors who kill off plants and whether they felt confident in my doctoring skills! One even bought me a Poinsettia as a Christmas gift for 2019. As I write this in November 2020 my Poinsettia is still alive and I've started feeding it hoping it will survive to Christmas. I've learnt they don't like over watering and need an even temperature.

We may be feeling of no use, weedy, or dead spiritually. If we turn to Him anew, he will give us himself and help feed and revive us, re-kindling our dry, dusty spiritual leaves. He will provide the right amount of nourishment and the right environment for us to grow. I see that feed and water as our daily connection with him, whether it's prayer, reading our Bible or just enjoying his presence. The right environment he gives us is the church where we can meet with fellow believers, whether that is in person, online or by phone.

Poinsettias come from Mexico and have a backstory (apart from them not surviving my care). A poor Mexican girl was supposed to have a red blanket to cover "the baby Jesus" in a community nativity procession. Her mother fell ill and was unable to help make a blanket, which made the girl very upset. As she cried and prayed to God, she collected

As we move through Advent this year, we may feel especially dry, dusty and drab with all that 2020 has imposed on us. If that is so, do come back to God in whatever way seems right and connect with your local church. We'd love to greet you again and help you regrow your faith to become the beautiful vibrant individual God intended you to be. The care and attention you receive will be much better than the plant on my shelf, I promise!

"Come near to God and he'll come near to you" James 4:8

Have a blessed Christmas and a better 2021. (to get in touch please use the email address stlaurencealvechurch@yahoo.co.uk)

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Spiritual Resources during Covid-19

In addition to our church service details, mentioned on page 10, please do look at our weekly recorded services on YouTube. A fresh service is available each Sunday morning, and you will find the link to our channel (St Laurence Alvechurch) on the homepage of our website – www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org

You will also find a link to resources for personal prayer, reflection and worship on the home page of our website. Please feel free to try whatever you may find helpful.

Lectio365 (www.24-7prayer.com/dailydevotional) this free app is a daily devotional resource that helps you encounter God and shape your life by praying the Bible every day. The readings and the prayers may be read and/or listened to.

Time to Pray (www.chpublishing.co.uk/apps/time-to-pray) - this free app presents everything you need for Prayer During the Day, with variations according to the day of the week and the season of the Church's year.

Daily Prayer (www.chpublishing.co.uk/apps/daily-prayer) - this free app helps you follow any of Morning, Evening and Night Prayer (Anglican Common Worship). It presents the three services in full with NRSV Bible readings for each day.

If you are looking for a **free reflection/meditation** any day of the week, try the Franciscan Richard Rohr from the Centre for Action and Contemplation: www.cac.org/category/daily-meditations/

If you are looking for a useful resource for **reshaping your daily pattern of living** in a way that fits with how your life is, try the Rule of life booklet from St Aldates Church in Oxford: <http://www.staldates.org.uk/about/vision>

The Church of England has launched a new programme to help families to talk about faith and pray together. **Faith at Home** will explore themes including courage, patience, generosity, resilience, love and hope. Faith at Home can be accessed at www.churchofengland.org/faithathome

Other worship at home ideas for children and families: ideas and resources to help you share your faith with your family at home – see the Worcester Diocese website at - www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/children-family-worship-at-home

Online church services across the Diocese – see: www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/news/2020/03/21/online-church-services-across-diocese/

Daily chants from Taize may be found at - www.churchtimes.co.uk/coronavirus-resources

New resources to connect with Church families

For many churches, our present and ongoing situation with the pandemic has seen a dramatic reduction in connections with our church children, with the challenges of not being able to meet in Sunday schools and church children's clubs.

To help parishes, our Calling Young Disciples team have created some interactive resources for children to use each week during church services, or at home.

The resources can be easily access via the QR code below, which can be reproduced on pews and notice sheets or accessed direct from the diocese website via the website address below. The resources can be accessed using mobile phones, tablets (with internet access) and computers at home, simply point the device's camera at the QR code - it will bring up the link and away you go!

The resources will be updated each week and will relate to one of the readings from the lectionary.

The Bible reading will be available to read, with a short explanation to help the children to understand it, and there will also be a short prayer and links to the resources related to the theme that week. The resources are available at different levels: easy, medium or hard.

We hope that these resources will help the children connect with the Bible stories in a new and interactive way!

You can find the Interactive Children's Resources at - www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/interactive-childrens-resources

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Thoughts in a Covid world

Phillipa Brakes writes...

So we have a second lock down which may or may not be coming to an end as you read this. As I lost all sense of time or date during the first one, I'm not expecting any better of myself this time; my ability to meet deadlines and arrive anywhere on time has vanished, so we'll be lucky if the turkey is ready for New Year. That's if we have a turkey, of course. They may be unobtainable due to too few migrant workers, or it may be pointless having one as there may be just the two of us on the day instead of the usual dozen or so. In that case, we could still be eating turkey at Easter.

Has anyone else experienced this feeling of disorientation, where one day runs into another, often with little to distinguish them, cut off from many of our usual routines? It's not been as dramatic this time, but still strange. What happens when strange starts to feel normal, as we all learn to live with Covid for the foreseeable future?

I have found the only way to stay grounded is to hang on to the only thing that does remain absolutely constant and unchangeable – God. It's rather like being at sea in a storm, thrown around as the ship breaks up underneath us and then finding an island where the ground is firm and safe beneath our feet. God stands firm and we can hang on whilst we find our feet. I'm so grateful that he has never let me down, however difficult things get. His love and strength have always been available.

There's a beautiful song "*Faithful One So Unchanging*" that I belt out (sorry neighbours) when I feel weak. The words seem to sum up what I've been trying to say:

Faithful one, so unchanging, ageless one, you're my rock of peace. Lord of all, I depend on you. I call out to you again and again. I call out to you again and again. You are my rock in times of trouble. You lift me up when I fall down. All through the storm, your love is the anchor. My hope is in You alone. (Written by Brian Doerksen. He also wrote "*Refiner's Fire*". Another one worth a singalong!)

Next time you feel the waves overwhelming you, try holding up your arms, or if things are really desperate, try lying flat on the floor and say "*I can't do this Lord, but you can.*" In my experience, he will never fail, and, in his strength and peace, you'll find you can face whatever it is because you are not alone, but held in the most loving arms that will never let you fall. Amen.

January 2021 Edition Grapevine Deadline

PLEASE NOTE - the deadline for anyone wishing to submit articles for our January 2021 edition is -
MONDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2020

Wishing all our readers a very Happy Christmas and good health for the New Year. Stay safe everyone.

Alvechurch WI

Pam Horsfield writes...

Luckily the weather stayed dry for our second short walk in the village when three groups set out along the canal and then, for those who wanted, went to The Red Lion for a cup of tea. Obviously lockdown has prevented a November walk but hopefully we'll do it again sometime.

Wonky Winnie, our AWI scarecrow, also looked truly drunk sitting outside the village hall but we assure you that she had a cup in her hand, not a wine glass!

This month we had an excellent speaker on Zoom as Tim Mackrill, manager of The Palace Theatre, came and chatted to us about the history of the theatre and how it's managed to cope over lockdown. It was fascinating hearing of all the eco systems in operation to cut costs and how students from the university come to get theatre training there. He was a really easy speaker to listen to.

On Monday December 14th Tony Brannon is running a Christmas Musical Bingo session for fun and to get us in the festive spirit. Let us know if you want to join us on Zoom and we'll let you have the link and the bingo cards if possible. It seems too soon to be wishing you to get into the Christmas spirit, but maybe this is what we all need to brighten difficult times.

Good wishes from Alvechurch WI members.

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News from the Tower

Geoff Franklin writes...

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Reach readers in Alvechurch, Rowney Green, and surrounding areas. The magazine is also available as a download on the church website.

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It's been a bit of a disappointing year in the bell tower. We've not been allowed to ring for most of the time, we've not been able to run any events or have any visitors, and we've had to turn away people who were wanting to learn.

Bell ringing involves half a dozen or so people standing fairly close together in a small room and taking some gentle exercise. It was banned completely at the start of the first lockdown for obvious reasons but in September the Diocese gave us clearance to start ringing again subject to some precautions. The most awkward of these was that we have to stand two metres apart in the tower. This means that we can only have four people ringing and is why you may have noticed the bells sounding rather thin and unmusical recently. There's not a lot of scope when you've only got four bells. As an aside, it's worse with only three bells because all you can do then is "Three Blind Mice" and it's rarely appropriate.

Despite all this, we've at least been able to keep the clock running and chiming over the village. The clock movement is a hundred years old and is driven by weights that have to be wound by hand; it's something like a 30-foot tall grandfather clock. Normally we would wind it twice a week, once at practice and again on Sunday. During lockdown Colin Bennett, the Tower Captain, has been making weekly trips up the tower to wind the clock. Thanks to him we've managed to keep some sort of continuity.

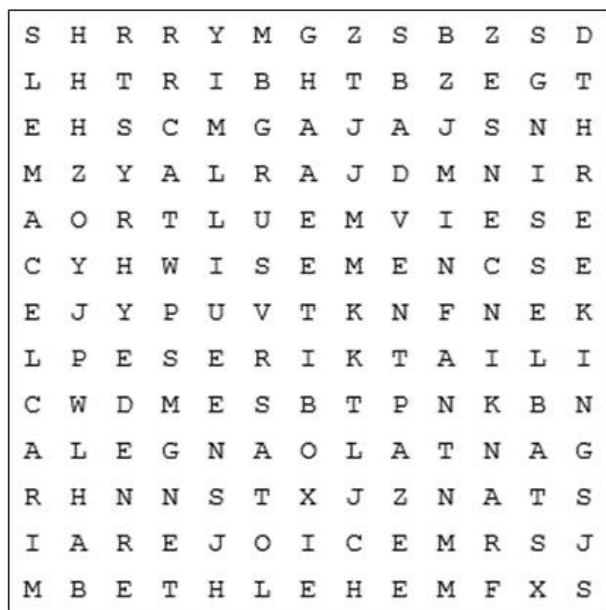
As I write this though we're just starting the second lockdown so Sunday ringing has stopped again. We were hoping to get some sort of dispensation to ring for Remembrance Sunday but that's looking unlikely now. Let's hope we can be back to some sort of normality for Christmas.

Message from Jill Woolley

A big thank you to all my friends for their cards and good wishes for my "big birthday". They were very much appreciated. My family and I had made plans to celebrate with you all in The Ark but the virus stopped those. However we will all meet again - just don't know when. Until then keep well and safe. Love to you all Jill.



Joy to the World



ADVENT
ANGEL
BETHLEHEM
BIRTH
BLESSINGS
CAMELS
FRANKINCENSE

INFANT
JESUS
JOSEPH
MAGI
MANGER
MARY
MIRACLE

MYRRH
NATIVITY
REJOICE
STABLE
STAR
THREE KINGS
WISE MEN



Our in person Church Services

In November because of the second lock down, we have not been able to hold in person services in church – we have only been able to open the church for one hour for private prayer from 10am to 11am.

After 2 December we **hope** that it will be possible to re-start our limited in person services in church, subject to the safety requirements, on the same basis as in September and October, as follows:

1. **9.30am** - on 1st Sunday family communion service, and on 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays family worship service.
2. **11.15am** - on 1st Sunday morning prayer (common worship), and on 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays communion service (common worship).

Safety restrictions include, amongst other things, our not being able to sing together. Two metre distancing means we cannot safely fit in more than 31 people per service in the marked seats, but of course members of the same household are able to sit together and this will increase the maximum number who may be accommodated. Face coverings are also required, unless you come within one of the exempted groups. We will also need to ask at each service for contact details for the government's "*test and trace*" scheme.

Because of the uncertainty over changes in government restrictions, please check our website for any updates/changes.

Whether or not we are allowed to hold in person services in church, we are continuing to produce our weekly recorded

services online. You will find the link to our YouTube channel on the homepage of our website – www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org

Please pray for wisdom and patience as we seek to deal with this situation in the best way for the well-being of all concerned.



Special Christmas Services at St Laurence

Recorded services online :

1. Carol Service, available from 9.30am on Sunday 20 December (you will find the link to YouTube on our church website).
2. Children's Christmas Eve Nativity Service, available from 9:30am on Christmas Eve (you will find the link to YouTube on our church website).
3. Christmas morning service, available from 9:30am on Christmas Day (you will find the link to YouTube on our church website).

In person services in church, if allowed by government restrictions – **please check our church website for any changes:**

Midnight Communion Service at 11:30pm on Christmas Eve: **because of limited seating capacity due to covid restrictions, to be sure of reserving a seat, please contact our church office by 12 noon on Friday 18 December** 0121 447 7955 or email - admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk

Christmas morning worship service at 10:30am on Christmas Day: **because of limited seating capacity due to covid restrictions, to be sure of reserving a seat, please contact our church office by 12 noon on Friday 18 December** 0121 447 7955 or email - admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk

Special Christmas Services in Alvechurch and Rowney Green

For St Laurence's, please see page 10 opposite.

Alvechurch Baptist Church

The Baptist Church in Red Lion Street hope to be celebrating Christmas with services on:-

Sunday 20th December - Family Festival Services at 10.30am and 4.30pm .

Christmas Day - Christmas Family Worship at 10.30am.

There may still be restrictions in place limiting the numbers who can attend so please look at our website - www.alvechurchbaptist.org.uk for more details nearer the time; or e-mail us on enquiries@alvechurchbaptist.org.uk

St Mary's Roman Catholic Church

For St Mary's Roman Catholic Church, please see the website for details – www.ourladyofmountcarmel.co.uk

Rowney Green Shared Church

There will be no in-person services at Christmas , but online worship opportunities continue and information can be accessed via the church's Facebook page - www.facebook.com/RowneyGreenChapel



Comfort and Joy

“Comfort and Joy” over the Christmas period

This Christmas the Church will need, in the words of St Paul in Romans 12.15, to *‘Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep’*. We will aim to celebrate where we can together in one place – but also embrace a wider community that wants to join in the celebration but may not be physically able – or emotionally ready – to do so. We hope that **Comfort and Joy** will enable us to build a campaign that both enables us to reconnect with the rich and joyous traditions of the past and to offer God’s consoling love in the present.

You are invited to join the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and guests, as they reflect on *“Nine Lessons and Carols”* daily between Christmas Day and 2 January - go to www.churchofengland.org/ComfortAndJoy , and explore.

Embracing change!

*Nikki Groarke,
Archdeacon of
Dudley writes...*



At the end of September, I fell and badly broke my shoulder. A momentary lack of concentration, whilst running, massively changed many aspects of my daily life in a year which had already been so difficult and strange. It has been challenging – though the fact that much of life is still virtual means that not being able to drive is less of a problem than it normally would be.

So much I took for granted about life has changed. I have had to adapt to doing life one-handed, and am very reliant on the help of others for the simplest of tasks – my lovely mum even had to help me get dressed for the first week.

Change is also very much part of our shared landscape at the moment. Following on from our second round of open conversations, we have encouraged everyone across the Diocese to reflect on what needs to change in our churches so they can be healthier and more sustainable – communities where we are growing as Kingdom People. I wonder where you are on this change journey.

I know many are beginning to engage in local discussions, thinking about ways to do things differently, sharing suggestions for new models of ministry. Churches across

Worcestershire and Dudley have already demonstrated remarkable adaptability and resilience this year as we have navigated the impact of Covid-19 restrictions on much of what we took for granted in church life. Holy Week and Easter services moved rapidly online in those early days, none of us thinking for a moment that we would still be having to rethink our normal patterns of worship for advent and Christmas. We have been in a constant state of change and flux, and it feels hard to put energy into beginning to reimagine a future with yet more change.

If there is one thing I have learned through the autumn, it's that with a broken shoulder I need to swallow my pride and seek the support of others for the simplest of tasks. Because I can't run I have been trying to walk with people each day – but everyone who comes walking with me has to first tie my boot laces!

Change of any kind is easier when others do it with us. Across our diocese, our churches will need to change in the year ahead to flourish and become all God made them to be in these challenging times, but we are in this together. Please do contact us as archdeacons if we can support you in your thinking and planning. And if ideas are bubbling up and we are allowed to do so, I'm very happy to ponder them with any of you during a socially-distanced winter walk around Droitwich, if you do up my laces first!

Advent is a season of new beginnings. Let's embrace the opportunity to share hope that 2021 will be a year of exciting possibilities, and may we all know God's comfort and joy as 2020 draws to a close.

The Christmas Story

Luke 2: 1-14

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria). And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord

shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, *'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'*

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.'



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DailyHOPE

A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has launched a free national phone line as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes while church buildings are closed because of the coronavirus. Please pass this information on to those who can't access the internet, and would like to hear some hymns, reflections and prayers.

'Climb' with the Children's Society

During the lockdown, the Children's Society started a new project in the West Mercia region to support young people who could be at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

Officially launched in May, 'Climb' receives funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner and is a diversionary project aiming to provide young people who might be susceptible to going down a criminal path, with more positive ways to spend their time. Young people aged between 10 and 17 can be referred to the programme from a number of different places – some self-refer or their parents ask for help and others have already had professional involvement from another agency.

The Services Manager for Worcestershire and Herefordshire, Georgia Boyce said: *"By working with the young person to encourage them to be involved with more positive activities, it reduces the risk that they will become involved in negative behaviour. We listen to the young person, ask them where they want to be and then work out how we can help them get there. It's definitely not a 9-5 job and we'll often be out in the evenings playing cricket or tennis!"*

There are a wide range of ways in which a young person might be supported through the programme. The team might pay for a year's subscription to a local football or rugby team and buy the kit so the young person can attend training. Others get involved in creative writing or local drama groups. Sometimes it's just about supporting the young person to attend school on a regular basis.

A full-time project worker can have a case load of around 14 young people all requiring different levels of support. During the school holidays the team will put on activity days, giving young people the chance to do things like water activities, go karting or creating their own music video.

"It's all about keeping them busy so they don't get involved in anything more negative, said Georgia. "It's also a chance to give them a taste of different activities to see if there's something they might want to take further."

Since May, the team have had 133 referrals and although it's been difficult during the pandemic, the team have worked hard to adapt, staying in touch with the young people through text, phone calls and video chats. *"We're now starting to go back out to do face to face meetings, but have actually found that some prefer the virtual support, so it'll be a mix of both going forward,"* said Georgia.

"We'll support any aspect of the young person's life that they need help with. It's all about building up trust with the young people, helping them to grow in confidence and raising their awareness to vulnerable situations. We'll always be at the end of the phone if they need help and will keep supporting them until we are sure that they have other networks in place."

The name 'Climb' was suggested by a young person helped through the service who felt that she had been in a deep hole and the project worker really helped her to climb out of it and see the opportunities around her.

Find out more on The Children's Society website -

www.childrenssociety.org.uk/climb

Christmas message from Churches Together in Alvechurch and Rowney Green(CTARG)



What a unique year 2020 has turned out to be. Who could have imagined a year ago as we watched a drama unfolding in a little-known city in China, that within a relatively short time it would become a major crisis in our own country? The interconnectedness of our 'global village' has become really obvious. And I'm glad it isn't me having to decide which is more important - people's lives or their livelihoods.

I think the thing that has stood out most for me during this time has been how people have come together for the good of the community; the amazing people in our own village who looked out for the more vulnerable among us; Captain Tom walking up and down his garden to raise money for the NHS, and more recently Marcus Rashford and his wonderful effort to make sure no child is allowed to go hungry during the school holidays. And of course all those unsung heroes, the ordinary people, who kept the country running during lockdown – not only the marvellous NHS staff, but the shop workers, delivery drivers and all the other amazing people who tried to keep things as normal as possible. And I'd like to give a special mention to all the teachers, who worked so hard to make sure that the education of the children in their care carried on despite lockdown – as well of course as having the children of 'key workers' with them throughout.

The followers of Jesus, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas, were ordinary people who worked alongside others for the good of their communities. In the book of Acts in the New Testament there are many stories about people in the early church working together for the good of everybody, and not allowing the more vulnerable – the children, widows and strangers – to suffer. There are stories too of the 'strange' Christians who looked after their communities in times of plague, famine and hardship. I feel proud to be following in the footsteps of those first disciples of Jesus, who lived 2,000 years ago, but whose message of love, care and compassion is still so relevant, and to be part of a similar caring community here in Alvechurch. It's one of the many things I know I shall miss as I begin another adventure in London.

Christmas is about celebrating the birth of a vulnerable baby who lived and died because of his great love for all people. We celebrate by sharing our love with those near and dear to us, and let's hope that this year won't be too different. So, from everyone in Churches Together in Alvechurch and Rowney Green a very Happy Christmas to you all, and we hope and pray for a less eventful 2021!

Jane Lavery
Chair, CTARG.

Cathedral's Undercroft restoration is complete!

Worcester Cathedral is delighted to announce that the Undercroft restoration works are finally complete, and it is now possible to start using the Undercroft Learning Centre!



At a special Handover Ceremony on the Wednesday 14 October the space was officially handed back to the Cathedral by Croft, our contractors. The space was immediately put to use on Thursday 15 October when we welcomed our first school group into the space. 30 Year 5 students from St Barnabas CE First & Middle School, Worcester, spent the day in the Undercroft, learning about the Civil War and the role of Worcester Cathedral in the Battle of Worcester.

The Dean, the Very Reverend Peter Atkinson, said:

"This is the completion of many years of planning, designing, and fundraising. What has been achieved is the first fully thought-out use for this glorious building in five hundred years. We have many people to thank, and when we are able to celebrate in a more public way, we shall be making sure that all our donors and benefactors are properly thanked. In the meantime, we look forward to the Undercroft coming into use".

Director of Education Daniel Parnell said:

"It was such a special moment when Andy Hutchings from Croft the building company handed over the key to the Dean. We have waited a long time and we are excited for people to see and experience this unique space."

Located along the side of the South Cloisters and once used by the Benedictine Monks as their store room, this unique space has been brought back to life by a team of master crafts-men plus our very own brilliant Stone Masons and it will now be used as a flexible venue for learning of all kinds.



From schools visits to corporate training days and everything in between, the Undercroft has been designed to be part of the community and we are so excited to be able to share it with you.

We have Arts & Wonder workshops in the Undercroft over half term. For more details go to: www.artsandwonder.co.uk

Our intention is that Undercroft will be available each month for general Cathedral visitors to look around when it is safe to do. We'll let you know more about these soon.

A huge thank you goes to all of the people involved in making this project a reality and to each and every donor that shared our vision, especially the National Lottery Heritage Fund whose support was key to making this project possible.

Faith at Work Appeal

Faith at Work in Worcestershire, FWW, is launching an appeal to help respond to the great opportunities of these challenging times. We are focusing on three key priorities - for churches and individuals to contribute through prayer for the economy of Worcestershire and the work of FWW within it; for more people to volunteer and train as chaplains; and for financial support to make all this possible. We want as many people as possible to be part of a new initiative we are calling '**Supporters of FWW**' - SFWW - where all contribute as volunteers – as prayers, chaplains, trustees, ambassadors, financial donors, fundraisers, and much else besides.

PRAYER - One unexpected consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic is the rediscovery of prayer. More people are joining services online than went regularly to church pre-pandemic. We should not be surprised. And though chaplaincy had to stop - for a while at least - prayer has not; for those still at work, those on furlough and facing redundancy, for wisdom, and compassion, healing and peace. It is a reminder that prayer is not only a last resort in times of crisis, but a key part of our relationship with God and with each other. As we launch the FWW autumn appeal, we aim to make Prayer our first priority. We will be producing prayer resources for personal use; for use in services online and in church; and for sharing with others facing difficult times.

Above all we need people to commit to pray - by themselves and with others, so that everything else we do is grounded and built upon prayer. Would you be prepared to commit to that? Do tell us, and we will make sure you get the resources and regular updates.

CHAPLAINS - When we went into lockdown, and all face to face workplace chaplaincy had to stop, we immediately began planning for a safe return of our chaplains, when it became possible. This resumption has progressed slowly, and chaplaincy continues, despite more recent restrictions. The need is great, and chaplains

who have been able to get back to visiting have been warmly welcomed by those who are still working and who are anxious for their future. There is much to talk about.

Inevitably some chaplains have not been able to return yet, and with increased need we are focussing on seeking out new volunteer workplace chaplains, from our current partner churches, and through new links. So, as you read this, would you please consider – if you are not a chaplain, would you be able to volunteer in your local economy? Can you think of people in your church who would be a good chaplain? Please approach them and see if they would like to find out more through an online taster session, '**Discovering Chaplaincy**'. Our aim is to run a '**Discovering Chaplaincy**' session before the end of the year and run an online training course early in 2021. The need is great. Please help us reach out, in the love of God, to those struggling in our economy.

FINANCIAL DONATIONS - We are well aware that many charities and churches are making special appeals for financial support at this time. In the current climate of economic uncertainty, business collapses, job losses and increased burdens on business owners, we consider it is vital that our outreach work continues and if possible, even extended.

It cost FWW just over £30,000 to run our small charity in 2019. We are generously supported by grants from denominations, local church partners and also by Kidderminster Industrial Chaplaincy.

To further enable our work, would you consider making a one-off or a regular donation in order to support FWW? You can support us financially by making a donation by cheque, BACS transfer, or via the give.net secure online portal. See www.faithatwork.org.uk/donate/ for more details.

If you have any questions or wish to respond to our appeal, please contact us by email at - enquiries@faithatwork.org.uk or speak to Revd Dick Johnson on 07946 65450.

Parish Prayers

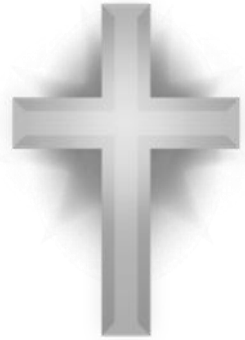
At this time, we pray for all those who live and work in our community and especially those who live and work in:

Old Birmingham Road – 6 December

Old Rectory Lane – 13 December

Pestilence Lane – 20 December

Radford Road – 27 December



Loving God,
Help us remember
the birth of Jesus,
that we may share
in the song of the angels,
the gladness
of the shepherds,
and worship of
the wise men.



~ Robert Louis Stevenson

From The Registers



Funerals and Cremations

May they rest in the peace of Christ

12 November

Dorothy Smith

Who's who

Rector	Revd Richard Bubbers, Rector, School Lane, 445 1087 stlaurencealvechurch@yahoo.co.uk
Licensed Lay Ministers	Mrs Sue Phillips Wardle, 55 Birmingham Road, 445 0505 Mrs Helen Ayling, "Tarncroft", Hewell Lane, Vigo, 445 6176
Authorised Lay Ministers	Mrs Helena Allen Mr Martin Allen, 445 5605 Mrs Philippa Brakes, 56 Callow Hill Road, 445 3983 Mr Graham Clark, The Coach House, School Lane, 445 2547 Mr Michael Fletcher, 13 Red Lion Street, 447 8451 Mrs Annette Thomas, 8 Snake Lane, 445 5180
Churchwardens	Mr Graham Clark, The Coach House, School Lane, 445 2547 Mr Mick Fletcher, 13 Red Lion Street, 447 8451
Deputy Wardens	Mr Colin Bennett, 122 Redditch Road, 01527 64077 Mr David Richmond, The Ferns, Chapel Lane, 445 3569 Mrs Alison Smith, 12 Hollington Road, 447 7293 Mrs Janet Wright, 28 Callow Hill Road, Alvechurch, B48 7LP Mr Andy Notley, 445 5653 Mr Roger Wardle, 55 Birmingham Road, 445 0505
PCC Secretary	Mrs Lysandra Notley, lysnotley@icloud.com, 07989327043
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Mrs Sue Lambert, 7 Cygnet Close, B48 7PX, 07769110608
PCC Treasurer	Mrs Janet Wright, 28 Callow Hill Road, Alvechurch, B48 7LP
Organist & Choirmaster	Mr David Richmond, The Ferns, Chapel Lane, 445 3569
Electoral Roll Officer	Mrs Janet Wright, 28 Callow Hill Road, 445 4335
Tower Captain	Mr Colin Bennett, 122 Redditch Road, 01527 64077
Singing Group	Mrs Lynda Wolstencroft, 49 Hinton Avenue, 445 3212
Ark Tots & Toddlers	Mrs Sarah Linton, sarah100work@gmail.com
Flower Co-ordinator	Mrs Ann Thurrell, Top Barn, Scarfield Hill, 447 7668
Ark Bookings Secretary & Grapevine Editor	Mr Ian Price, The Ark, School Lane, 447 7955 admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk

PCC Special Responsibilities

Finance and Standing Committee

Richard Bubbers	Mick Fletcher
Graham Clark	Janet Wright
Bob Dale	Peter Freeman

Buildings, Fabric and Churchyard for Mission Committee

Bob Dale	Colin Bennett
Graham Clark	Peter Freeman
Mick Fletcher	Andy Humphries
Janet Wright	

Children and Youth Committee

Martin Allen	Mick Fletcher
Thomas Birchall	Lynne Clark
Kate Birchall	Sarah Linton

Missionary Committee

Sue Phillips Wardle	Dick Russell
Gordon Parsons	Margaret Haste
Sally Bubbers	Sue Lambert

Calendar for DECEMBER



As we were still under lockdown when we went to press, please visit our church and Ark websites for details of our activities -

www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org and www.thearkalvechurch.co.uk

Monday 7 **JANUARY 2021 GRAPEVINE GOES TO PRESS:** *articles to -*
admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk (please note the new email address)

Text Giving for St Laurence Church

Help to preserve the church for future generations by making a donation to the mission and ministry of St Laurence's.

Just scan this QR code with your mobile phone to make a donation

You can make a donation with a quick and simple text message

Text "**STLALVECHURCH 5**" to **70085** to donate £5

Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message

Text "**STLALVECHURCH 10**" to **70085** to donate £10

Texts cost £10 plus one standard rate message

Text "**STLALVECHURCH 20**" to **70085** to donate £20

Texts cost £20 plus one standard rate message

Or you can also make a donation by scanning this QR code with your mobile phone



Or please send a cheque payable to **Alvechurch PCC**, posted to our parish office address at The Ark, St Laurence Church, School Lane, Alvechurch, Birmingham B48 7SB.

Or, if you would like to set up a direct debit (under the Parish Giving Scheme), this can now be done over the telephone – please leave a brief message on our church answerphone (0121 445 1087), or email the church email address (stlaurencealvechurch@yahoo.co.uk), with your name and telephone number, so that our church treasurer may contact you.

With our thanks and prayers.

Alvechurch PCC - Registered charity number 1131783

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