

The Grapevine

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ST LAURENCE CHURCH ALVECHURCH



*Joy to the world,
the Saviour reigns*



DECEMBER 2015

Online at www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org

St Laurence Church Alvechurch

SUNDAY SERVICES

8.00am Holy Communion

Book of Common Prayer Communion Service, will take place on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. On the other Sundays there will be an 8.00am Book of Common Prayer Communion Service at St Leonard's in Beoley

9.30am Family Service

*with Holy Communion on the 1st Sunday
and Baptisms on the 4th Sunday*

11.15am Parish Eucharist

6.00pm Evensong

On the 4th Sunday of the month at 6pm there will be Sacred Space, a quieter more reflective space for worship

At Rowney Green Shared Church

9.30am Methodist/Anglican Service

with Holy Communion on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month

DAILY SERVICE

9.00am Monday to Friday In St Laurence Church

ORGANISATIONS

Sunday Club	Sundays at 9.30am in the Church and Ark (445 1854)
Choir	Thursdays at 7.45pm in Church (445 3569)
Bellringers	Sundays at 10.30am and 5.30pm Tuesday Practice at 7.30pm (01527 64077)
Women's Fellowship	4th Wednesday of the month at 2.00pm in Tanyard Lane Community Centre (445 2125)
Mum's the Word	Thursdays at 9.30am in The Ark (07773509390) Tiny Tots Service 10.15am 1st Thursday of the month
Ark Café	Thursdays during term time at 12.15pm (447 7017)
Home Group	Thursdays, 7.30pm at the Coach House (445 2547)

THE ARK

Enquiries to Ian Price 0121 447 7955



Christmas: are you hurrying - or waiting ?

Recently I read something which caught my attention: "*Hurry is very close to cruelty.*" How could my hurrying be thought to be cruel?

I can think of no occasion in the Gospels when Jesus appears to have given the impression that he was in a hurry, despite the momentous things he was doing and saying in his three-year earthly ministry culminating in his death and resurrection. On the contrary, he seemed to have time for everyone.

We all need to be given time; we all need to be listened to: to have our selves given the very special care of being heard and treated sensitively and with respect. Those of us who rush around not only miss the real needs of others, but we also care poorly for ourselves. When I am too busy I do not have time to listen to my own needs or to the Christ who is trying to speak to me.

We are getting into the season of hurry – the pre-Christmas rush. Many people will get tired and angry and upset, and question the season of peace and goodwill. Then on the day itself many will feel disappointed that all the preparation has led to so little. But the question has to be asked, "*What preparation?*"

Advent, the season we celebrate pre-Christmas, is not the season of shopping but the season of waiting. We need to give more time, not less, to sitting

Richard Bubbers writes.....

still, to being quiet, to thinking about what, or rather who, we are preparing to receive, Jesus Christ. We are trying not to be as over - busy and tired as those innkeepers were in Bethlehem, so that we may be ready to see who comes knocking. We want to have a room prepared and a loving welcome for our Lord and Saviour.

I doubt that the innkeepers in Bethlehem were cruel – just in a hurry: but to the pregnant woman and her husband, turned away at the door, it must have all felt the same.

This edition of the St Laurence parish magazine comes to you with our best wishes for a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

Everyone is invited to attend any of our special Christmas services at St Laurence's, details of which you will find on page 12 of this edition of the Grapevine, and in the calendar on the last page.



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Churches Together

December Evening Service

Meryl Hill writes...

The December United Service for Churches Together in Alvechurch and Rowney Green will be at the Baptist Church on Sunday 13th December.

This will mark the opening of the tree festival and will take the form of carol singing for 45 minutes. You are invited for refreshments before the service from 4.00pm (instead of afterwards as is the usual custom at United Services).

St Laurence

Women's Fellowship

Jill Woolley writes...

Richard Churcherly was our speaker in October and he talked and sang about Folklore customs that are kept year by year, many going back through the centuries.

We look forward to our Golden Jubilee Celebration lunch on December 16th, when we will meet at the earlier time of 1pm.

So to the New Year when the first meeting of 2016 will be on January 27th and RussellRusty ...Smith will entertain us.

On February 24th Janis Waldron will talk about The History of Pearls and how to recognise different types.

We meet in the Tanyard Centre at 2pm and are pleased to welcome visitors and new members.....but please be aware of parking restrictions.



Model Railway Exhibition

David Richmond writes...

I don't know if there will be a full show in 2016. My family and I have been too busy to take any photos in the past exhibitions.

Does anyone have any photos of any part of the previous years that they could let me have?
I want to make up an album of those events.

Please get in touch with me on 0121 445 3569, or leave photos or a message with Ian at the Ark office 0121 447 7955.

I will pay for photos I am sent. Thank you, David Richmond.

Alvechurch Village Society

Ray Yarnell writes...

The December walk will be a "Winter's Walk around Alvechurch", led by Sally and John Slevin (07957821068). The walk will start at 2.30pm on Sunday 6th December from Tanyard Lane Car Park.

Also in December, to get rid of those Xmas excesses, there will be the Traditional Boxing day walk around the Lickeys, led by Norma and Ray Yarnell (0121 445 5739) starting at 10.00am from the Lickey Hills Visitor Centre car park.

The December event is our Christmas Party in the village hall on Saturday 5th December, with live music and dancing, Bar and a Fish and Chip supper. This is a ticket event, with proceeds in aid of The Lounge. Please see posters or ring Ray Yarnell for details (0121 445 5739).

Alvechurch Historical Society

Hilary Taylor writes...

The talk at our November meeting, called "Austin World War II Underground Tunnels & Manufacturing", was given by Neil Wedgbury, who worked at the Longbridge factory for many years. Using photographs, maps & diagrams Neil was able to give us an insider's view of the work carried on at Longbridge during the war. Over the years Neil has done much research into the subject, not least by interviewing people who were involved in this war work at the time.

Our next meeting is on **Monday 7th December**, when the subject will be "Edward Lear, Artist, Traveller and Writer of Nonsense Poetry". The speaker will be John Boynton. It promises to be a light-hearted and interesting end to our 2015 season.

The meeting starts at 7.45pm, at the museum in School Lane. Parking is available behind the Catholic Church, with their kind permission. New faces are always welcome, just come along, or contact our chairman, Anne Humphries on 0121 445 5955.

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Christmas Tree Festival

All are welcome to pop in to Alvechurch Baptist Church (next door to the Red Lion pub) during the week December 13th - 19th to see the trees decorated by village organisations.

The church will be open for this free festival every day from 10am with specific events at times. Just come in for a quiet time or join in an activity; you can pop in and out of sessions.

Sunday 13th - The festival opens with carol singing at 4.30pm(45 mins)

Monday 14th 3.30pm - 5pm Children (with their parents) can drop in and decorate a tree picture to put on display.

Tuesday 15th 2pm - 4pm Hand bell ringers.
5pm - 7pm informal music, harp, singing.

Wednesday 16th 2pm - 4pm Memory Lane and friends afternoon tea, carols and the mini choir.

Thursday 17th 10.30am - 12 noon Christmas readings.
12noon - 1.30 pm Business lunch.

Friday 18th 10.00am onwards coffee morning including tots service at 11.00am.
2pm - 4pm Crafty Ladies. Come and make a tree hanging.

Saturday 19th Community choir will close the festival with singing from 11.15am.

Withybed poets will be popping in for inspiration and readings. The work of the Tuesday art group will be on display.

Look out for local posters and press nearer the time or contact us for more information. Fiona, Pam Dave & Meryl
01527 63822, newsletter@alvechurchbaptist.org.uk

The Ark Café



The Cafe is now holding its popular Christmas lunches and the last one, which is now sold out, takes place on Thursday, 3rd December.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our customers for their continued support throughout 2015 and for making the Cafe a success.

We would like to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

After the Christmas break, we reopen on Thursday, 14th January 2016 and look forward to seeing all our customers in the New Year.

Rowney Green Flower Club

Celia Hitch writes...

Rowney Green Flower Club, invite you to their Christmas get together at the Peace Hall, Rowney Green, on Thursday 3rd December commencing 7.00pm. Wonderful flower arrangements (all raffled off at the end of the demo), buffet supper (please bring along a plate of something suitable), wine optional. Sherrie Phelps is back by popular demand, an outstanding flower arranger who will delight you with her Xmas demonstration entitled "Christmas Crazy". The competition is "Twinkle".

Visitors very welcome at a very reasonable £3, come and enjoy yourselves. You are guaranteed a lovely evening. Contact Celia 0121 445 4824.



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Rowney Green Horticultural Society

Lindsay Smith writes...

The usual monthly meeting will not be held in December 2015. Our next meeting at the Peace Hall will be held on Thursday, 14th January 2016 at 7.30pm, more details will be shown in the January edition of The Village.

New Members will be very welcome at the start of our 2016 Horticultural Year which includes excellent speakers on various subjects and organised trips in the summer.

The Committee would like to take this opportunity to wish all readers a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR. For more information please telephone Lindsay Smith on 01527 592874.

Picnic in the Park 2016:

Save the Date!

Clare Vas writes...



Spring fun and frolics will once again be with us at the annual Picnic in the Park, taking place on Sunday 1st May 2016.

The committee are working hard to ensure that the event is as successful as previous years, and villagers continue to enjoy the community day. In the tradition of May Day, there will be dancing around the Maypole, and much more.

The organisers are keen to share their ideas for the 2016 Picnic and would love to hear yours!

Follow the Facebook page to get an invite to the Public Meeting to be held in January: <https://www.facebook.com/Alvechurch-Parish-Picnic-in-the-Park-1531339597111557>

Christmas Wishes

Lyn and Mick, Alison and Mike, Margaret, Gloria and Anna, Veronica and Sue B, wish all their friends a Very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.



News from the Tower

Once again we're approaching Christmas and the busiest time of year for the bell ringers. We'll do our best to celebrate the season but we do have a real problem with the number of ringers.

St Laurence has eight bells in the tower and ideally all eight of them should ring for all services. Six bells makes a thinner sound but can still sound very nice if they are rung well. With five bells there's a noticeable gap in the sound and it's worse still with four. Last Sunday there were only three ringers on Sunday morning. The only thing you can ring with three bells is "*Three Blind Mice*" and that's not at all appropriate so the bells stayed silent.

Ten years ago St Laurence had a very strong team with half a dozen children from the Middle School learning to ring. Over the years the numbers have dropped. Some young ringers have gone away to university, some older ringers have gained commitments to family and work, and others have just moved out of the village. Whatever the reason, the membership is now at a worryingly low level and there is an urgent need for some new recruits.

Bell ringing is a rewarding activity and doesn't require any particular strength or knowledge to start. If you're fit enough to climb the tower stairs then you're probably strong enough to start ringing a bell. You don't need any musical knowledge either because the bells ring in patterns rather than in tunes. Learning these patterns exercises the brain whilst the ringing exercises the body. Finally, you don't need to be a church member to be a ringer; the bells ring for the benefit of the entire village.

If you would like to learn, or if you're a ringer who's just moved into the village, then phone Colin on 01527 64077 for more details or just visit the tower on a Sunday morning or between 7:30 and 9:00 on a Tuesday evening.

Despite the problems, the bells will ring for Christmas and the New Year and we hope that our audience will enjoy them as much as we do. St Laurence ringers.

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FOR FURTHER INFO

Parish Prayers

Prayers will be said at St Laurence Church for the residents of the following roads:



Sunday 6th December – Foxhill Lane
Sunday 13th December – George Road
Sunday 20th December – Glebe Road
Sunday 27th December – Grange lane

Alvechurch WI

Pam Horsfield writes...

November's meeting was very special. Denise Cashmore, President, welcomed members and many visitors to our meeting and we then sang Jerusalem.

Our speaker for the evening was Betty Webb who told us how she had worked at Bletchley Park during WW2. Betty was never able to discuss this with her family because of the official secrets act and it was only many years later when she could meet with others openly that she found out what role each person played in the success of the work at Bletchley.

Now Betty works with others to promote Bletchley Park and its history by giving talks. Enquiries are coming in from around the world and she and others have been involved in recording both radio and television programmes. We were so lucky that Betty lives locally and she was able to join us. She is a very special speaker.

This month members are going to our Group meeting at Hopwood WI; several will be on the coach from the village going on the Worcestershire Federation Christmas visit to Blenheim Palace and we look forward to our Christmas Party at Barnt Green Cricket Club.

Rowney Green Christmas Day

A Family Christmas Communion Service will be held at 9.30am on Christmas Day, (Methodist style) at Rowney Green Shared Church. Everyone welcome.

Christmas and New Year at Alvechurch Library

Christmas Craft Fayre

Come and join us on Monday 30th November 10-1pm and 2-4pm, for a selection of beautifully crafted gifts made by Alvechurch Libraries Crafty Ladies group.

Christmas Celebrations in Words and Music

On Tuesday 8th December from 11am come and listen to Christmas readings by Alyson and Sally, Fiona performing with her harp and Alvechurch Writers perform some of their own work.

Christmas Bedtime Stories

On Monday 21st December come in your pyjamas and listen to some Christmas Stories. See if we get a special visit from Santa!

Early session 5.45-6.15pm

Later session 6.45-7.15pm

Places filling up fast so please book your place quickly. £2 per child.

Explore Learning Workshops

Gruffalo Workshop on Tuesday 22nd

December from 11.30-12.30pm. Designed to develop literacy skills through rhyme and description. For 5-6 years olds. No charge, please contact the Library to book your place.

Wimpy Kid Workshop on Tuesday 22nd

December from 2.15-3.15pm. Design your own diary entry to remember all the adventures of a day in your life. For 7-11 year olds. No charge, please contact the Library to book your place.

New Year

We have an Italian language class on offer in February. This course is suitable for those

with little or no knowledge of Italian. You will learn vocabulary and phrases for common tourist situations in Italy and listen to spoken Italian. You will also learn the grammar to underpin this and extend your ability to understand and converse in Italian. Starting on Tuesday 2nd February and running until 4th April, 10am -12noon. A ten week costing £95.00.

Our **Spanish** classes have been massively popular and due to customer demand we are starting a new beginner's class on Thursday afternoons early in the New Year.

For those lucky people who were good this year, had a visit from Santa and found a new iPad or tablet in their stocking, Alvechurch Library have three courses, due in January and February that will be right up their street.

IPad for beginners, a brilliant starter course for anyone who has just had a new iPad. The course covers the basics such as turning the device on and off, the settings, how to open and close apps, how to take photos and how to use the internet. Monday 11th January, 2.15pm - 4.15pm, £19.00.

EBay Basics, a fun introduction workshop for anyone who would like to start buying and selling on eBay. Monday 25th January, 2.15pm – 4.15pm, £19.00.

Social Networking, Introduction to Facebook and Twitter, how to register, use and have fun on social networking sites. Monday 8th February, 2.15pm – 4.15pm, £19.00.

All of these courses can be booked and paid for online via www.worcestershire.gov.uk Please look under adult learning. Or pop into Alvechurch Library, where you can pay by cash or cheque and we will book you in.

Christian Mindfulness Day Workshop

**Saturday 16th January 2016
9.30am to 4pm**

Venue: The Ark, adjoining St Laurence Parish Church,
School Lane, Alvechurch, Worcestershire, B48 7SB

Christian mindfulness is deeply rooted in the ancient Christian tradition of contemplative prayer, and today is being discovered by many to be very relevant in helping with the busyness and noise of our daily lives. It encourages us to calm and to be present in the moment, and to hear what God is saying.

This three session workshop explores mindfulness from a Christian perspective and includes PowerPoint presentation, video clips and small group discussion. There will also be a variety of self awareness and God awareness meditations throughout the day.

The workshop is presented by Richard Johnston (director, Christian Mindfulness).

To book your place on the Workshop visit the website
www.christianmindfulness.co.uk/alvechurch.html

£25 per person up to 16/12/15 (£30 per person for booking after 16/12/15). Bring your own packed lunch.

Christmas Services

The churches in Alvechurch are preparing for the special services during the Christmas season.

St Laurence will hold the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at 6 pm **on Sunday 20 December**. This is part of a long tradition of telling the Christmas story in readings and song with well-known carols for everyone.

St Laurence will hold two Family Nativity Services on **Christmas Eve** (Thursday this year) including favourite carols and the story of the Nativity: children are preparing to perform in the drama at the 4pm service and at the 6pm service.

The Midnight Communion Service on **Christmas Eve** at St Laurence begins at 11.30pm and welcomes in Christmas Day.

An All-age Service will be held at St Laurence at 10.30am on **Christmas morning** (Friday).



Worcestershire & Dudley Friends of the Holy Land

Sam Setchell writes...

A new Worcestershire and Dudley Friends of the Holy Land group is launching in January.

**Worcestershire and Dudley Group Launch Event with Bishop John
Thursday 21 January 2016, 7pm
Trinity Methodist Church, Churchfields,
Kidderminster**

Many Palestinian Christians in Israel continue to find daily life a struggle.

We hear about the Jewish/Muslim conflicts and often the indigenous Christian population, which is rapidly shrinking, is forgotten. Within Gaza and the West Bank Christian and Muslim Palestinians live in close community and support each other. Yet the Christians are a minority. So many families have fled the constant persecution, particularly the younger members leaving behind an older population.

Many pilgrims to the Holy Land endeavour to visit these “*Living Stones*” – the Christians who are struggling to survive. It was after such a pilgrimage in 2009 led by the now Archbishop of Westminster Cardinal Vincent Nichols that people returned saying – we must do something to help. Out of this desire came the Friends of the Holy Land: A non-political group that seeks to offer friendship and financial support to Christians in the Holy Land.

From small beginnings in 2009 Friends of the Holy Land quickly became ecumenical with groups springing up all over the country. Each diocesan bishop was asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury to identify someone

in their diocese to take this forward. As a result an ecumenical group has been formed covering Worcestershire and Dudley.

The objectives of the group, as of the national Friends are:

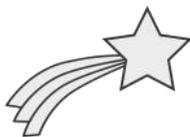
- To raise awareness of the challenges facing the Christians of the Holy Land
- To encourage prayers for their intentions
- To generate financial resources to give them a sustainable future
- To encourage visits to the Holy Land to meet local Christians.

We are a very new group. We are raising a small amount of money already by having collecting boxes, but hope to arrange a launch event over the winter months to take the project forward.

In the summer some of us were delighted to meet with Fr Fadi Diab who is Priest in Charge of St Andrew’s Church, Ramallah. Fr Fadi told us that Christians in the Holy Land are living in a critical time with the suspension of the peace talks. The economic situation is grim and with unemployment at 40% people are leaving – many to the Gulf states. In Ramallah there is a Christian School, but it is facing financial difficulty and work to develop a care home for seniors has also come to a halt.

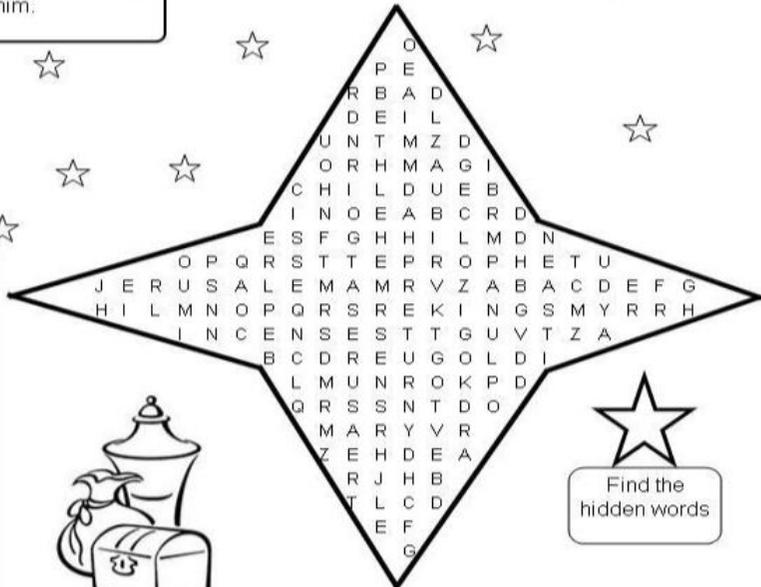
FHL identifies and supports the neediest Christians and has projects in employment, education, health and housing. Our FHL group is considering offering support to the school in Ramallah which won’t just be financial but a two way friendship.

Please do come along to the launch event on 21 January to share in an evening of Palestinian food and learn more about the ways you can help support Christians in the land of Christ’s birth.



The Wise Men

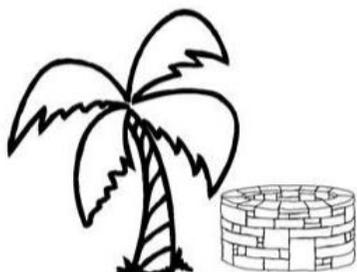
We saw his star in the east
and have come to worship
him.



- Bethlehem
- Herod
- Magi
- Jerusalem
- King
- East
- Star
- Prophet
- Child
- Mary
- Treasures
- Gold
- Incense
- Myrrh
- Dream
- Return



Find the
hidden words



Tackling Loneliness with Reconnections

A new service to help connect older people with their communities.

Reconnections is a new service covering the whole of Worcestershire and aims to tackle loneliness amongst older people by supporting them to connect with their communities through their own interests.

The service is open to anyone living in Worcestershire, who is over 50 years old and is suffering from or at risk of feeling lonely.

Reconnections is a partnership of local organisations and groups, led by Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire, and is based on international best practice around reducing loneliness in older people.

What we do

Reconnections provides tailored, one to one support for older people to help them find and engage with activities which interest them in their local areas. Together with a network of volunteers, the service aims to help older people enjoy activities and build connections: from coffee mornings and bridge clubs through to Zumba classes and golf lessons, the service will find the right activities and networks and support individuals to take part in them.

Why we do it

Did you know that 1 in 10 older people suffer from intense feelings of loneliness?

Loneliness has a big impact on our health and wellbeing. By connecting to those around us, we can stay happier and healthier for longer. 49% of over 65's say their main form of company is the TV 12% of over 65's say they never spend time with their family 9% of older people feel trapped in their own home

How it works

A Reconnections Officer will visit you in your own home or at a locations where you feel comfortable to learn more about you and

together you will discuss opportunities for you to engage with interests and activities in your local community. A trained volunteer will then support you to make these opportunities a reality: supporting you to travel to activities, answer any questions you may have, work on building your confidence or simply checking in to see how your day was. Your volunteer will support you for up to six months and after that we will call you to see how you are doing.

Loneliness is the subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship. It happens when we have a mismatch between the quantity and quality of social relationships that we have, and those that we want.

For most individuals, loneliness ebbs and flows with particular events (eg: the loss of a loved one) and can be part of normal life. But for the 10% of the older adult population, loneliness is a chronic feeling and a heavy burden.

The causes of loneliness are multiple and range from unfamiliarity with social opportunities to significant life transitions and deeply ingrained lack of self-confidence. Addressing loneliness therefore requires a person-centred assessment of need, the co-production of responses to loneliness with the older person, appropriate support and the development of longer term formal and mutual support networks. To make a referral either use the Reconnections Referral form or contact us:

Call: 01905 740954 or 0800 195 8040
Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire,
Malvern Gate, Bromwich Road, Worcester.
WR2 4BN.

Email: reconnections@ageukhw.org.uk or
ageuk.hw@nhs.net
www.reconnections.service.org.uk
Charity no: 1080545

Who is Welcome this Christmas?

Archdeacon of Dudley Nikki Groarke writes...



There was no-room for the refugee family. Everywhere was full to overflowing. The last inn they tried was packed, so they had to make do with a shed, camping out, making a home as best they could, finding somewhere dry at least, so the baby could be born under the shelter of a barn roof.

No room for the refugees. It's been an ongoing theme of our news cycle this year as the plight of families fleeing Syria has worsened. We have witnessed millions of people fleeing war and violence in what has become one of the largest refugee crises ever recorded. And it has been the pictures of child refugees which have most impacted us.

Jesus, as a child, was a refugee, unwelcome and homeless. No wonder then that as he grew up and began his earthly ministry, he called outcasts friends, invited those on the edges to come closer. Many of those who were comfortable and settled continued to reject him, or simply missed the opportunity to welcome him into their homes, their lives, because they did not grasp who he was.

We easily sanitise our recounting of the birth of Jesus as we celebrate Christmas. The stable becomes a homely scene, softly lit, populated with wise men, shepherds and cute donkeys. We forget it was a last resort: a dirty shed occupied because young refugee parents were shut out of all the more suitable accommodation. Let's allow ourselves to engage with this part of the story differently this time, perhaps allowing ourselves to consider whether we would have welcomed a refuge family into our homes then, and whether we would now.

Let's also reflect this Christmas on whether we are really ready to welcome Jesus into our homes, our lives, not just at Christmas, as a baby, but the rest of the year, as our Lord and Saviour, and one who invites us to love and welcome those who are outcasts, as he loves and welcomes us.

Stained Glass Windows

Margaret Haste, Fund Co-ordinator writes...



Firstly, a huge thank you to anyone who has, in whatever shape or form, contributed to the fund-raising effort. The fund now stands at some £17,500, which is a wonderful achievement.

The past year has been spent mainly in preparatory work e.g. identifying suitable individuals/companies to undertake what is very specialised work. This phase has taken longer than we would have hoped but, as we know with our experience of restoring the bells, important projects on Grade 2 listed buildings often take longer than initially anticipated. We are expecting the work to gain momentum with the imminent appointment of a new architect (with relevant experience of stained glass windows in churches) and the recent involvement of the Revd Andrew Mottram (Buildings and Community Development Officer for the Diocese of Worcester), who has committed to provide ongoing support, particularly in regard to grant applications.

The fundraising group, which consists of Sue Brotherton, Barbara Griffiths, Veronica Rogers and myself will be meeting in the New Year to identify what events could be organised for 2016. If anyone reading this has any ideas, your input would be more than welcomed.

2015 has exceeded all expectations in terms of what can be achieved, thanks to the generosity and commitment of all involved. Let's make 2016 just as good.



CANDLELIT CONCERT

Saturday 12 December 7pm for 7.30pm

The Midland Sinfonia begins the 2015/16 season with this very popular concert and features:-



Vivaldi – The Four Seasons
Elgar – Serenade for Strings
Albinoni – Aadagio
Paganini – Cantabile
Svendsen – Two Swedish Folk-Melodies
Ireland – Downland Suite



Richard Laing is our conductor for the evening with David Le Page on violin.

Come and enjoy the wonderful atmosphere and superb acoustics that the church offers.

Tickets: on the door £13, In advance £12 from The Village Green Grocer, Alvechurch or www.midlandsinfonia.co.uk

FT students free and schoolchildren accompanying an adult free.

For more information: marian@midlandsinfonia.co.uk or 0121 447 7040 .

Adult Dance Classes at The Ark

Now in their sixth year at the Ark, Invitation to Dance's popular classes return after the Christmas break on Tuesday, 5 January 2016.



Classes focus on one dance style at a time for four weeks, and then move on to a contrasting style. At 7:30pm beginners can learn their *'First Steps in Waltz'*, while at 8:30pm dancers with a little existing dance experience will be dancing their *'Next Steps in Jive'*. In February, the beginners move on to Cha Cha & Rumba, while the improvers switch to Tango.

January is always a popular time for new beginnings and no previous dance experience is required. Classes cost £6/person and advance enrolment isn't necessary. Instructor, Clive, will be happy to answer any questions (t: 07871 170016).

Flowers for DECEMBER

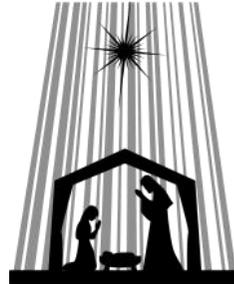
By tradition there are no flowers in church again until Christmas Day. I will be in church on Wednesday 23rd December from 9.30am to decorate for the Christmas services. I really would like some help with this most enjoyable task. Please, please get in touch with me either personally in church, by telephone or email, to offer help. I would be very happy to have some of our lovely children coming along to lend a hand and to add their special touch to the arrangements.

Ann Thurrell 0121 447 7668 Email : annthurrell@hotmail.co.uk

Sing Hosanna!

Some people don't feel they can sing loudly in church, as they find keeping in tune difficult (if not impossible). This poem is dedicated to them.

Praise the Lord in merry song,
Praise him, praise him all day long.
But what of me? I cannot sing –
I have no melody to bring.
But in the Bible, joy of joys,
The Lord says: "Make a joyful noise!"



Anonymous

Jesus Is The Reason

In Bethlehem, God gave to us
The source of Christmas joy;
A star shown on a miracle:
The virgin birth of a boy.

He was born both God and man,
A Saviour for us all,

The way to get to our heavenly home,
If we just heed His call.

So as we shop and spend and wrap
And enjoy the Christmas season,
Let's keep in mind the sacred truth:
Jesus is the reason.

By Joanna Fuchs ©

From The Registers



Funerals and Cremations

May they rest in the peace of Christ

November 23

Ernest Ricketts

Who's who

Rector	Revd Richard Bubbers, The Rectory, School Lane, 445 1087 stlaurencealvechurch@yahoo.co.uk
Licensed Lay Ministers	Mr Dick Russell, 2 Gothic Cottages, Radford Rd, 445 3083 Ms Sue Phillips, Withybed Green, 445 3620
Authorised Lay Ministers	Mrs Helena Allen, 117 Birmingham Road, 445 5605 Mr Martin Allen, 117 Birmingham Road, 445 5605 Mrs Philippa Brakes, 56 Callow Hill Road, 445 3983 Mr Graham Clark, The Coach House, School Lane, 445 2547 Mrs Lynne 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 Ms Gloria Wilson, 11 Bear Hill Drive, 445 1854
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 Mr Andy Notley, 38 The Buckleys, B48 7NF
PCC Secretary	Mrs Enid Brumsen, 32 Callow Hill Road, 445 0663
PCC Treasurer	Mrs Susan Seeley, 40 Bear Hill, B48 7JX
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
Mum's the Word	Mrs Kate Grove, 07773509390
Flower Co-ordinator	Mrs Ann Thurrell, Top Barn, Scarfield Hill, 447 7668
Women's Fellowship	Mrs Jill Woolley, 111 Birmingham Road, 445 2125
Ark Booking Secretary) & Grapevine advertising) Grapevine Editor)	Mr Ian Price, The Ark, School Lane, 447 7955 thearkalvechurch@yahoo.co.uk

PCC Special Responsibilities

Finance and Standing Committee

Graham Clark	Mick Fletcher
Alison Smith	Bob Dale
Janet Wright	Susan Seeley

Children and Youth Committee

Martin Allen	Mick Fletcher
Thomas Birchall	Lynne Clark

Buildings, Fabric and Churchyard Committee

Mick Fletcher	Colin Bennett
David Richmond	Jill Woolley
Janet Wright	Lynne Clark

Task Committee

Mick Fletcher	Dick Russell
Graham Clark	Sue Phillips

Peru and Missionary Committee

Sue Phillips	Dick Russell
Gordon Parsons	Margaret Haste

Calendar for DECEMBER



Thursday 3	9.30am	Mums The Word
	10.00am	Tiny Tots Service: Sarah Linton
	12 noon	Ark Café: Christmas Lunch (Ticket Only - Sold Out)
	7.00pm	Rowney Green Flower Club: Christmas get together: Peace Hall, Rowney Green
Saturday 5	7.30pm	Alvechurch Village Society: Christmas Party: music, dancing, bar, Fish & Chip Supper: (Ticket Only) Alvechurch Village Hall
Sunday 6	2.30pm	Alvechurch Village Society: <i>"Winter's Walk around Alvechurch"</i> : Meet at Tanyard Lane Car Park
Monday 7	7.45pm	Alvechurch Historical Society: Talk by John Boynton on Edward Lear: Museum, School Lane
Wednesday 9		(PLEASE NOTE EARLY DATE) - JANUARY GRAPEVINE GOES TO PRESS <i>articles to thearkalvechurch@yahoo.co.uk</i>
Thursday 10	9.30am	Mums The Word
Saturday 12	7.00pm for 7.30pm	The Midland Sinfonia Candlelit Concert: St Laurence Church
Sunday 13	4.00pm for 4.30pm	United Service for Churches Together: Refreshments before the service from 4.00pm: Baptist Church
Monday 14	1.45pm 7.30pm	Forget-Me-Nots: The Ark Ark Angels WI
Wednesday 16	1.00pm	St Laurence Women's Fellowship: Golden Jubilee Celebration lunch: Tanyard Centre, Alvechurch
Thursday 17	9.30am	Mums The Word
Sunday 20	6.00pm	Nine Lessons and Carols: St Laurence Church
CHRISTMAS EVE		
Thursday 24	4.00pm	Family Nativity Service: St Laurence Church
	6.00pm	Family Nativity Service: St Laurence Church
	11.30pm	Midnight Communion Service: St Laurence Church
CHRISTMAS DAY		
Friday 25	10.30am	All-age Christmas Morning Service: St Laurence Church
Saturday 26	10.00am	Alvechurch Village Society: Boxing day walk around the Lickeys: Meet at Lickey Hills Visitor Centre car park
		<i>(Our thanks to Ian Macvie for the front cover photograph)</i>