

# The Grapevine

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ST LAURENCE CHURCH ALVECHURCH



**MAY 2021**

Online at [www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org/monthly-magazine](http://www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org/monthly-magazine)

# **St Laurence Church Alvechurch**

**Our in person services in church resumed on 28th March, albeit on a limited basis subject to current safety restrictions. Please see page 12 for more details about our services. Our other activities and groups remain suspended because of the pandemic.**

**Please consult our website ([www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org](http://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 12 for more details: the link to our YouTube channel is on the homepage of our website - ([www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org](http://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](mailto:admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk))**

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## **Philippa Brakes writes...**

should be. The fifth commandment tells us to honour our parents; the seventh indicates that adultery harms the family bond.

Strange things families! When family life is good and everyone pulls together, those around that family benefit from the overflow of love, kindness and simple joy that seems to spill over. When a family falls out, everyone around can be showered in a kind of toxic dust that poisons the very air they breathe. The saddest thing is when people feel obliged to take sides in what is really often just a tragic human tale of incompatibility and misunderstandings.

While avoiding anything other than an oblique reference to THE INTERVIEW, it is interesting to note that family relationships remain much the same as they always have, complex and often incomprehensible to those outside the inner circle.

The bible is full of complicated family relationships – Jacob manipulates and cheats his brother out of his inheritance (Genesis 25). The prodigal son (Luke 15, 11-32) demands his inheritance from his father, thus effectively wishing him dead. Yet throughout the bible, God's teaching on family shines out. The concept of family is present from the first, when God blesses Adam and Eve and it is clear that the family is the building block of human society. The family is there to enable us to care for one another which is why it is so shocking when Adam and Eve's son Cain kills his brother, Abel. "*Where is Abel, your brother?*" asks God. Cain replies casually "*Am I my brother's keeper?*" Clearly God thinks he

The New Testament develops the theme of family further. Saint Paul says that children should obey their parents, but I love the addition that says "*parents don't provoke your children,*" a reminder that all family members' feelings and needs are of equal importance. Also reassuring is the reference in 1 Corinthians 7 that an unbelieving spouse is sanctified by the believing spouse, such is the bond between a couple.

Jesus widens the whole idea of family. "*Who are my mother and brothers?*" He points to his disciples. "*Here are my mother and brothers, for whoever does the will of my father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.*" (Clearly there must have been some women amongst the group closest to him). Surely, if we are all brothers and sisters, we are all "*our brothers' keepers*" and responsible for the happiness and well-being of all whom God has given us to love.

Beautifully, Jesus tells the full story of the prodigal son who, realising the wrongness of his behaviour, returns to the father he has hurt so badly, who has waited lovingly, silently and prayerfully and who wraps him around with love. Wouldn't the world be a wonderful place if we could all follow the father's example, the example of God, and forgive the thoughtless hurts others inflict, waiting lovingly for reconciliation so that once more the love, kindness and joy can flow through us to bless others.

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## Statement by the Archbishop of Canterbury on the Death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said today (8 April): "I join with the rest of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth in mourning the loss of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh, and give thanks to God for his extraordinary life of dedicated service. Prince Philip continually demonstrated his unflinching support and unstinting loyalty to Her Majesty The Queen for 73 years. "He consistently put the interests of others ahead of his own and, in so doing, provided an outstanding example of Christian service. During his naval career, in which he served with distinction in the Second World War, he won the respect of his peers as an outstanding officer.

"On the occasions when I met him, I was always struck by his obvious joy at life, his enquiring mind and his ability to communicate to people from every background and walk of life. He was a master at putting people at their ease and making them feel special.

"The legacy he leaves is enormous. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which he founded in 1956, has inspired generations of young people to help others and instilled in them a vision for citizenship and a desire to serve their communities. His work with countless charities and organisations reflected his wide-ranging, global interests in topics including wildlife, sport, design, engineering and inter-faith dialogue.

"In his powerful advocacy for conservation his was a prophetic voice for over half a century, as he brought people from around the world to a new concern and commitment to action for the future of our planet.

"As we recover and rebuild after the terrible trial of the coronavirus pandemic, we will need fortitude and a deep sense of commitment to serving others. Throughout his life Prince Philip displayed those qualities in abundance, and I pray that we can take inspiration from his example.

"I also join many people in giving thanks for the marriage of Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip, and for their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Theirs was a marriage grounded in friendship and mutual respect and sustained by shared faith in Christ.

"I pray that God will comfort Her Majesty and the rest of the Royal Family at this time. May His Royal Highness rest in peace and rise in glory."

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## Resources to connect with Church families from the Diocese

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, Worcester Diocese's 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 accessed via the QR code below, or 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 is 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](http://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/interactive-childrens-resources)

Here is the QR code. Just scan with your mobile phone -



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## Flowers

*Ann Thurrell writes...*

It has been a long time since we have been able to worship in church and a very long time since we have had flowers in church. It was wonderful to be able to meet up with Monica Clarke and Helen Jones to 'socially distance' flower arranging for Easter. Although we were not able to make donations in memory of loved ones towards the Lilies this year, we were able hold them in our prayers. Michael Morris of The Nursery Shop in Redditch, who is the nephew of the late John & Mary Sidwell, provided our Lilies in perfect condition. If you were not able to attend either of the Easter Day services here are some photos for you to enjoy.



## Spiritual resources during Covid-19

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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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/](http://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](http://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](http://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/children-family-worship-at-home)

**Online church services across the Diocese** – see: [www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/news/online-church-services-across-the-diocese.php](http://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/news/online-church-services-across-the-diocese.php)

**Daily chants from Taize** may be found at - [www.churchtimes.co.uk/coronavirus-resources](http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/coronavirus-resources)

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## St Laurence Monday Group 1,250,000 step challenge page

Please if you are able could you support us on our mission. Christian Aid is challenging people to do 300,000 steps during the month of May. We want to do what we can to support the charity's effort to help those in the world struggling to cope with poverty, climate change amongst other challenges.

We are a small group who in normal times meet on a Monday evening to share and develop our Christian beliefs and values. The group is mixed age and of varying physical ability, so although we can't all individually manage 300,000 steps together we are going to aim to achieve 1,250,000 steps (or more) from May 1st to 31st May.

We realise that finances may be stretched, but would be grateful for any donation no matter how small.

Thank you and God bless you.

**HERE IS THE LINK TO SPONSOR OUR GROUP -**

**[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/rachel-towers3](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/rachel-towers3)**

Examples of how Christian Aid might use donations are :

£10 could buy a tap at a water point which will be installed at an earth dam, making it easier for people to fetch water.

£42 could buy 350kg of cement, which is needed for building work.

£335 could pay for a communal water point with two taps, situated at an earth dam, where people can collect water.

£545 could pay for a skilled labourer to work on the construction of an earth or sand dam.

### **Christian Aid Week, 10-16 May:**

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals>

Commemorating 75 years of Christian Aid, this new publication is a prayer book like no other.

Full of defiance and determination, it is an invitation to join Christian Aid and followers of Jesus around the world in a united chorus of Rage and Hope.

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/news/rage-hope-75-prayers-better-world-book-launch>

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Christian Aid is empowering some of the world's most vulnerable people. In Bangladesh, our partner Shushilan is supporting local groups of farmers, young people and women by training and funding them to set up small businesses. Menoka (pictured) received Shushilan's support in setting up this stall which she has run since 2014.

**Together we are helping some of the world's poorest communities lift themselves out of poverty.**



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## Spring Word Search

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u	s	l	a	m	b	s	a	i	e
i	m	a	t	l	a	n	t	f	s
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g	l	p	a	c	i	f	i	a	n



spring  
flowers  
blossom  
rain  
lamb  
umbrella  
growth



# Sharing hope in our communities

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



*“For many of us, life without God has turned out to be life without fellowship and shared meaning - and in the midst of the most disorientating, debilitating crisis most of us have ever known, that social tragedy now cries out for action.”*

These striking words come at the end of a column in The Guardian by journalist John Harris, triggered by ticking the ‘*no religion*’ box as he completed his census form. Reflecting on the ravages of the pandemic and lockdown, he observed that in our individualistic, secular society most people lack *‘even the flimsiest of narratives to project on to what has happened, or any real vocabulary with which to talk about the profundities of life and death’*. He comments on the visible comeback of symbols and rituals of religion as churches have been at the heart of community Covid experiences; including increases in google searches for prayer and millions tuning in to online worship. He quotes research showing that church groups offer *‘solace and peace and relaxation and friendship, helping us in our spiritual quest for meaning and wellbeing.’*

As Kingdom People, we are called to share hope and play a part in transforming our communities. So how are we to respond to this social tragedy crying out for action? As we limp out of lockdown and dare to look forward, we can make space to regroup, to reflect, to process and to mourn. And we can invite our communities into safe spaces to do this alongside us as people of faith. So many new links have been forged as neighbourliness has grown with church members finding ways to bless and serve those around them who have been isolated and cut off from families and far away friends. Many church members find it easier to serve practically than to broach the topic of someone’s spiritual needs, but we have the language and the wider narrative in which to frame and make some degree of sense of what has happened. We have tasted eternity. We know God’s peace which passes understanding, and we have relationship with a God who heals and provides, who comforts and gives renewed purpose and hope. Gently offering the opportunity to a neighbour to discover this peace, healing and hope is something all of us can dare to do, even if we are shy to talk about our faith.

There is a spiritual longing in a lonely and confused generation that has experienced a year like no other. We have a part to play in reaching out to those who yearn for something more, drawing alongside in the gentle sharing of our own experience of the God who loves indiscriminately. Let’s ensure that as we give thanks for the chance to gather in worship with our church family once again and as we lament loss with those who understand, that we invite and include those who long for a way to make sense of it all, but who have only just begun to glimpse that church might be the place to find what they seek.

# Update on in-person services in church



Following the government's latest announcement on the way forward out of the pandemic, in person services in church resumed on 28th March, albeit on a limited basis subject to current safety restrictions. These services on a Sunday are planned as follows:

1. 9.30am – on 1st Sunday family communion service, and on 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays family worship service.
2. 11:15 am – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday morning prayer (Common Worship) and on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays communion service (Common Worship).

Our recorded services will continue on our YouTube channel. You can find the channel by either searching on YouTube for "***St Laurence Alvechurch***", or via the direct link - [www.youtube.com/channel/UCVQ6tgn7g6qT7vJ1Rh3vxpg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVQ6tgn7g6qT7vJ1Rh3vxpg)

We are praying for everyone's safe keeping during this difficult time.

You can access various prayer, bible reading, reflection and worship links on our website by visiting - <http://www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org/resources>

The Rector and Churchwardens may be contacted by telephoning 0121 445 1087 or emailing - [stlaurencealvechurch@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stlaurencealvechurch@yahoo.co.uk)

**Safety restrictions** at the time of going to print include our not being able to sing together. Two metre distancing means that we cannot fit in more than 31 people per service in the marked seats, but of course members of the same household/bubble 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, or while you are taking part in leading a service. At each service we need to ask for contact details for the government's "*test and trace*" scheme.



# Thoughts in a Covid world

*Philippa Brakes writes...*

At the moment, we seem to be surrounded by countries struggling with yet another wave of this monstrous virus. I'm beginning to understand how the Israelites of bible times must have felt, constantly surrounded and threatened by enemies who could attack and kill them at any time. Yet here and now our enemy is unseen and insidious and is devastating our friends across the Channel. We are in no position to feel smug and face being overwhelmed ourselves, relying solely on our trust in a small vial of fluid injected into our arms to keep us safe.

How often did the Israelites seem to have the frailest chance of survival? When David faced Goliath, he was a puny boy opposing a vast giant. The disciples were eleven in number, after Judas' betrayal of Jesus and had to start to spread the love of Jesus worldwide. In both cases, the outcome was success.

When need is there, in my experience, God does provide. He provided David with the skill he needed to slay Goliath with a slingshot. He provided the early church with the ideal man to spread the teachings of Jesus – the Roman, St Paul. He has provided us with the skills to produce a powerful vaccine, the internet to connect us and the wonder of on line church services worldwide to unite and inspire us. When you get a chance, drop into a church anywhere in the world and find out what God has to offer us all. Whatever giant problems are facing us in our lives at the moment, may God give us the strength and endurance to overcome and may he inspire and enable us to spread his love to all those who need it.

## Plans to reopen The Ark

Following the government guidelines and the roadmap reopening dates, we are planning to restart various classes from 17th May.

These will include:

**ZUMBA** with Kym Monday evenings. Call Kym on 07794 638273

**ART CLASSES** Tuesday morning and afternoon sessions. Call 0121 251 0080.

**KARATE CLASS** for all the family on Tuesday evenings. Call Chris on 07507696926.

**YOGA** with Sally Wednesday afternoon and evening. Call 07903663085.

Our **ARK TOTS & TODDLERS** Thursday group is not currently running.

**FLORISTRY CLASS** with Claire Thursday evenings. Call 07564 339157.

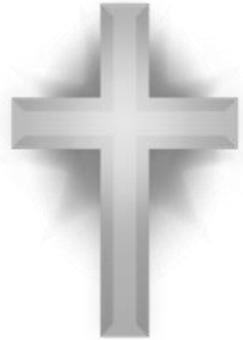
**DANCE CLASSES** with Zoe and Tamara (Endeavour Dance Academy), classes for children only restarted on 12th April. That was the only class that could restart at the time.

Classes for adults can restart from 17th May. Monday and Friday early evenings. Call 07307 854414.

# 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:

- 2 May – Swan Street**
- 9 May – Swans Length**
- 16 May – Swans Walk**
- 23 May – Tanyard Close**
- 30 May – Tanyard Lane**



## A prayer following the lockdown changes on 12 April:

Almighty God, as we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus, we give thanks for signs of new life in our economy. We pray for all those returning to work; for safety and a new sense of purpose and fulfilment in all they do.

Grant to those who still face uncertainty, wisdom in all things, clarity in what needs to be done and hope for the future.

This we ask in the name of your risen Son, Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

## From The Registers



### Funerals and Cremations

*May they rest in the peace of Christ*

Maureen Mears	18 March
Maisie Wheeler	23 March
John Folkes	30 March
George Harris	7 April
Helen Higginson	8 April

# Who's who

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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
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 Mr Michael Davenport
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 MAY



Please see our church and Ark websites for details of our activities -  
[www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org](http://www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org) and [www.thearkalvechurch.co.uk](http://www.thearkalvechurch.co.uk)

FRIDAY 14    **JUNE 2021 GRAPEVINE GOES TO PRESS:**  
*articles to - [admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk](mailto:admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk)*

## 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.

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](mailto: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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