

The Grapevine

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ST LAURENCE CHURCH ALVECHURCH



OCTOBER 2020

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

St Laurence Church Alvechurch

Please see page 6 for our limited services in church: otherwise 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 6 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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Richard Bubbers writes...

The wisdom of letting go.

I always used to struggle with packing for a journey, until a friend pointed out that deciding what to leave behind was as important as choosing what to take. It was good advice. Change, whether in a time of pandemic or not, involves "letting go" - it may involve letting go of a role or relationship which has meant a lot to us, or a possession which we have cherished. It may also involve our letting go of "baggage", which is weighing us down and holding us back: a sense of rejection or bitterness, a feeling of regret or guilt.

Suffering has been described as when we are not in control, and change often involves our not feeling in control. The reality seems to be that, until the present falls apart, we are not ready to look for something more. This has been my experience, and, if you look back, this may resonate with your experience. It seems to be the way in which we discover what really sustains us and are enabled to grow in our understanding and experience.

As David Benner says, *"Letting go is an important spiritual practice, but it is counterintuitive because the default posture of most of us is to clutch, not to release."* Healthy spirituality often has more to do with subtraction than with addition. In our contemporary consumer culture, religion is

often a matter of addition: obtaining more good ideas about God and more "Brownie points" with God, and producing moral behaviour. This will not get us very far, particularly in the face of suffering. Spirituality is not about attaining or achieving, because that only builds up your ego and keeps it at the centre of everything and as the ultimate reference point. Authentic spirituality is about the wisdom of letting go. This helps us to grow up and to stop making the same mistakes: we can discover what is real and true and learn the way of love, which is our soul's purpose.

As we journey through change in our current situation, to receive the new thing God wants to give us, we may need to let go in order to create the space to receive it. And letting go requires trust – trust that the emptiness will be filled; trust that a new sense of purpose and direction will emerge; trust that day will follow night; and trust that resurrection will follow death. Above all else, the Bible consistently and clearly reveals that the God of Israel is the one who turns death into life - this is shown supremely in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (see Isaiah 26.19, Romans 4.17, 2 Corinthians 1.9). We can trust the transformative pattern of death leading to life, and know that God is with us in the suffering. As a friend used to say to me, let go – and let God.

"Goodbye" is a contraction of the phrase *"God be with ye"*: as we have our goodbyes along this transitional path, may we be reminded that God is with us and remember to practice the wisdom of letting go.

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Spiritual Resources during Covid-19

In addition to the limited services in church mentioned on page 6, 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

Thoughts in a Covid world

Philippa Brakes writes...

Who would have thought that, in our wealthy country, people could be suffering because no help was available? The last few months have been a wake-up call and sometimes truly frightening for vulnerable people who have faced the feeling that they and their problems just don't seem to matter in the vastness of the situation that engulfs our world. It's a feeling probably very familiar to those in third world countries who sometimes wait for relief that never comes, but it's new to us and disconcerting to say the least.

So – do we matter? Is anyone noticing our suffering, our concerns, our terror of abandonment or loss, of going under the water for the third time, with no one to pull us up?

Only someone who has suffered themselves can truly understand another's pain, so Jesus is in the very best position to understand. He suffered rejection, abandonment, ridicule and excruciating pain. He knows. He's been there, wherever we are. He will always listen, always answer. Sometimes we want God/Jesus to be a slot machine, granting us anything we ask for, like a child demanding ice cream. God loves us too much to let us become warped and selfish. He wants us to grow and learn – to be nourished and nurtured properly. Sometimes pain and fear are the way we learn and grow as we learn to lean on him. We will all reach a place at some point in our lives where there is no one else and, if we take the time to listen and allow him to bless us, we will find our problems are not so huge and unmanageable after all, with him beside us, ahead of us, holding us when necessary, we can face anything. He is our *"way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper, light in the darkness."* Jesus won the victory over sin, suffering and death, once and for all, so we have nothing to fear and everything to reach for.

The words in quotation marks are from a song called Way-maker, sung by Leeland and written by Sinach, a Nigerian gospel songwriter. It's a beautiful and encouraging song.

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Our Church Services



On Sunday 6 September we started our limited services in church, adhering to the safety requirements. Below is the planned schedule of our services for the time being:

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.

Please also note on Sunday morning the Ark is open only for the use of the **toilet**, and because of the current health restrictions, only the disabled toilet will be in use.

We are planning to continue to produce our weekly recorded services online, when we start up limited services in our church building, particularly for those who are not able to attend church at the moment. 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 come out of lockdown in the best way for the well-being of all concerned.

A big THANK YOU from Peggy Nickless

I would like to thank all my family and friends for the beautiful cards, presents and flowers, given to me on my 90th birthday. The garden party arranged by my neighbours at Lewkner Cottages on the afternoon was a lovely surprise and very much appreciated.

God bless you all,
Peggy x



Prisons' Sunday - 11 October

Prisons' Sunday, on the 2nd Sunday in October, begins a week of prayer for all those affected by prisons and will be on 11 October in 2020. Each year, the Diocesan Criminal Justice Affairs Group (CJAG) leads a service in the Cathedral – this year, it will focus on the impact of Covid-19 on the criminal justice system.

Charmian Manship, from the CJAG said: *“There are very real concerns that human rights have been ignored in prisons during the pandemic. There is a huge backlog of court hearings with raised anxiety of victims, witnesses and defendants; prison visits have been suspended affecting family relationships and prisoners are only let out of their cells for an hour a day with all education, social contact and gym facilities withdrawn. Most contact between probation and those on supervision has been by phone; and there is little mental health support.”*

The diocesan Criminal Justice Affairs Group aims to offer a Christian perspective and advises the Diocese on criminal justice matters. Members have experience of working within the criminal justice system, crown prosecution service, police, prisons, probation, youth justice, the parole board and defence lawyers as well as the Church.

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New Deputy Diocesan Secretary appointed



Rob Quarton has been appointed as the Deputy Diocesan Secretary for the Diocese of Worcester, a new post which has been funded by the national Church.

Rob will support the restructuring process taking place in the Diocese as we ensure that churches across Worcestershire and Dudley are healthy and sustainable for the future, enabling them to continue to bring the Good News of Jesus to their communities. He will be working 60% of a full-time post spread across four days.

Until recently, Rob was Relationship and Development Manager at the charity Frontline, which seeks to transform the lives of vulnerable children and young people through the recruitment and training of social workers. Prior to working at Frontline, he was the Director of Process Leadership at Jaguar Land Rover, where he led of a team of 72 people responsible for designing, building & implementing key business processes and structures. He is trained as a scientist and engineer.

Rob said: *"I'm delighted to have been appointed as Deputy Diocesan Secretary for the Diocese. It's an exciting role which fits my skills and experience as well as my desire to work in a meaningful and personally fulfilling environment. I have been a member of St John's Church in Greenlands, Redditch for over 30 years and have tried to express the light of Christ throughout my career. I'm looking forward to supporting the transformation of our church structures and operations, towards a relevant, successful and sustainable future."*

Rob is a Trustee of the Christian charity Bridge Builders and is co-founder and Director of the charity Touchstones Child Bereavement Support together with his wife Vicki. Touchstones supports children and young people in North East Worcestershire who have lost a mum, dad, brother, sister or other significant person. It works with around 150 children each year, and provides a programme of one to one counselling and support, as well as running group memory, feelings and activity days. Rob also volunteers as a Bereavement Counsellor at the charity. He and his wife Vicki have three children and one grandchild and Rob enjoys tennis, swimming and running, gardening and reading.

1 Corinthians 13 for a pandemic

Most people are familiar with 1 Corinthians chapter 13, if only because they have heard it read at weddings. Here is a paraphrase which makes it particularly relevant to our current situation:-

We can have all the best technology, fantastic preachers and music that doesn't lag or jump but if we don't love we're nothing but electronic feedback or an un-muted attempt at singing on zoom.

We can talk all the good sense in the world, know all the risks and have faith enough that God will stop this virus in its tracks and he does, but if we don't love, we've got nothing.

We can spend our days shopping for others, and our nights on the phone to the lonely and isolated until we're run ragged and exhausted. But if we don't love, we've got nowhere.

Love waits patiently 2 metres away in the supermarket, love is kind to those who feel forgotten, it does not envy the furloughed or take pride in its status as a 'key worker', it doesn't blame others for the virus's spread or seek to make money from other people's misfortune. It doesn't get angry at its rights being taken away nor does it keep records of its neighbours breaking lock-down.

Love does not delight in our leader's failings but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. This virus will mutate or die. Church will change – as it has before and will do again. Scientific knowledge will move on leaving what we have now in the dust.

For now we may only see in part but that doesn't mean we have a partial gospel and one day we shall see the full picture. Before this pandemic we knew nothing of R-rates, social distancing and lock-down, now we know better and have put our past understandings behind us.

For now we see but through a screen darkly, then we will see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.



Source Glastonbury Methodist Church

From the Bishop of Dudley



2020 has been such a strange year. Autumn has arrived, yet in some ways the year never seems to have got started. I feel I am still living with so many uncertainties, and trying to make plans on the constantly shifting sands of guidance and advice based on ever evolving Covid realities. We are all learners in this, and pioneers too as we discover new ways of being church. Tiredness and fatigue are very natural too and sometimes the weight of it all can press very heavily. I'm so encouraged by the prayerful determination in our churches to be people of hope, even in the darkest times.

Traditionally we celebrate Harvest at this time. Its been a tough year for farmers, with heatwaves, droughts and floods. Sowing seed in a wet winter was almost impossible, and many grain harvests have been poor. Nevertheless lorries and trailers filled with bales of straw and hay are testimony to the resilience and grit of our farmers, who just had to *'carry on carrying on'*, pandemic or not. I salute all those who work on the land, who produce our food and tend our environment. Brexit will affect them all, though its still not clear how. They deserve our traditional harvest thanks and prayers.

We give thanks too for the harvest of Kingdom Values that have been so evident in parishes up and down our diocese this year, for every glimpse of love, every act of compassion, every shout for justice and every step into freedom.

May the Lord of the world, the Lord of the harvest, bless you and keep you. One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Bishop Martin

Alvechurch Historical Society

Anne Humphries writes...

The society was disappointed to have to cancel their final annual party and open days at the museum hut in April due to the timing of the lockdown. In the months since then the hut has been cleared of exhibits and furniture. We have returned as many items as possible to local organisations (Village Society, Village Hall, Amateur Dramatics group, Football Club, Cricket Club, St Laurence Church, Scouts, WI and individuals with some still to be done. If you know anyone who loaned items which have not yet been returned please ask them to contact me (0121 445 5955).

In current circumstances negotiations to transfer items to Worcestershire and Avoncroft Museums have proved difficult but a cart and signs from the Ward business (now the dentist) and one of the wedding dresses plus accessories have been moved to Worcester Museums with agreement of their owners. Over the autumn and winter we will be working on transfer of archive books, documents and maps to the Archives at The Hive.

We were successful in obtaining a grant from Bromsgrove District Council which will fund a new modern display case in the library to house Alvechurch specific items and copying of photographs for the creation of scrapbooks to enhance their local history resources.

In common with other similar societies we have decided to cancel all meetings for the rest of the year. Our current plan is to restart with our AGM on Monday 1st February 2021 at The Ark but this will be subject to confirmation.

Jubilation in Morogoro as history made with first women Deacons

On Sunday 9 August 2020, women were ordained for the first time in the Diocese of Morogoro (in Tanzania)

Together with friends, family and clergy, 51 ordinands gathered in All Saints Cathedral to celebrate this significant event, which included the ordination of nine people to the priesthood. The service was led by the Bishop of Morogoro, The Rt Revd Godfrey Sehaba, who has expressed his great joy that women will now be a vital part of the ordained ministry team sharing the good news of Jesus Christ throughout the Diocese.

The three women ordained were:



Pendo Mauta: Pendo received her Diploma in Theology from Morogoro Bible College, having previously received a Diploma in Accounting from Jordan University.

Penina Madihi: Penina was born in Tunguli village and received her BA Theology degree from St John's University in Dodoma. She tutors at Morogoro Bible College.

Pasisi Maila: Born in Morogoro itself, Pasisi also received her BA Theology degree from St John's University in Dodoma. Pasisi is Principal at Berega Bible School.

Links between the Dioceses of Morogoro and Worcester have been established for almost a decade, during which time Morogoro church leaders have conducted a lively debate concerning the acceptance of women for ordination. After much discussion, last Autumn the Diocese announced that women would be ordained for the first time in 2020.

Bishop John said, *"I am delighted that Bishop Godfrey was able to ordain three women at the recent ordinations in Morogoro. We greatly appreciate our link with our fellow Christians there and rejoice at this news, praying for God's rich blessing on all who were ordained."*

We send our prayers and very best wishes to Pasisi, Pendo and Penina, their families and their parishes, as they begin their ministries.

Find out more about the Diocese of Morogoro at - www.morogoroanglican.org or www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/about-us/worldwide-partnerships/diocese-of-morogoro.php

In 2011, after much prayer and discussion, the Diocese of Worcester signed a Friendship Agreement with the Diocese of Morogoro in central Tanzania.

Ordinations in a time of pandemic

Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Vocation, John Fitzmaurice writes about this year's ordinations:



This year's ordinations will be like no other!

Candidates to be ordained as deacons and priests are usually ordained towards the end of June, around the time when the church commemorated the ministry of St Peter. This year of course we were in the midst of lock-down and ordinations have to be postponed and rescheduled for the end of September.

This of course was a crushing blow to those who were hoping to be ordained and who had been working toward this point for so long. Those who were hoping to be ordained simply carried on their ministries as deacon, while those hoping to be ordained deacon were licensed as lay workers by Bishop Martin (on Zoom!) pending their ordination as deacons.

The Ordination of Deacons will now take place at three separate services (three candidates at each) on Saturday 26 September at Worcester Cathedral, while the four priest candidates will be ordained in their parish churches the following day. Prior to the ordination services the candidates will gather at Holland House for a socially distanced Retreat, this year led by the Revd Catherine Williams who is a Christian Writer, Retreat Leader & Spiritual Guide and a former selection secretary at Ministry Division.

For the candidates themselves this has unsurprisingly been a really difficult time. Their forbearance has been remarkable, and is indicative of the fabulous people that they are. Some have just wanted to get on with it and be ordained and are not too put out by the severe restrictions on the number of guests and others who can attend; others are saddened that this great gift of God to them cannot be celebrated in grand style. Either way they have committed themselves to a patient waiting, while getting

on with the day-to-day tasks of ministry that present themselves in this most extraordinary of times, and they can draw hope from the words of the writer of the letter to the Philippians:

I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.
[Philippians 1.6]

Do please pray for all those in any kind of ministry, lay and ordained, at this time, and especially for those to be ordained.

To be ordained Deacon:

Claire Billington to serve in Peopleton and White Ladies Aston w Churchill & Spetchley & Upton Snodsbury & Broughton Hackett

Lindsey Coulthard to serve at St Stephen's Barbourne, Worcester

Foluso Enwerem to serve at Top Church, Dudley

Jon Evans to serve at Christ Church, Lye

Jess Fellows to serve at All Saints, Worcester

Chris Henson to serve at St John's, Kidderminster

Rosie Moss to serve at St Nicholas, Warndon, Worcester

Kim Topham to serve in Clent and Hagley

Carol Weston to serve in Brierley Hill

To be ordained Priest:

Sarah Bardell serving in the benefice of Dudley

Victoria Barlow serving in St Matthias & St George, Astwood Bank and St Luke, Headless Cross

Jonny Gordon serving at Great Malvern

Francis Moloney serving at Holy Trinity, Redditch

John Fitzmaurice, Director of Ordinands and Vocation

Parish Prayers

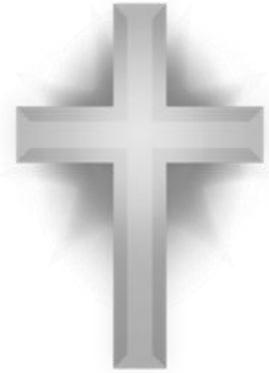
At this time, we pray for all those who live and work in our community and especially those who live and work in:

4 October – Ickneild Street

11 October – Jays Crescent

18 October – Kingsfisher Court

25 October – Latimer Road



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.

From The Registers



Funerals and Cremations

May they rest in the peace of Christ

25 August John Brown

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

| | |
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| Mick Fletcher | Andy Humphries |
| Janet Wright | |

Children and Youth Committee

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| Thomas Birchall | Lynne Clark |
| Kate Birchall | Sarah Linton |

Missionary Committee

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

Calendar for OCTOBER



Various classes are due to restart at The Ark towards the end of September and October, subject to any government or CofE changes. Please visit the Ark website for more details—www.thearkalvechurch.co.uk

Thursday 14 October November **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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