

# The Grapevine

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ST LAURENCE CHURCH ALVECHURCH



**AUGUST 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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## Martin Allen writes...

You may be familiar with the song “Turn, Turn Turn” which was a hit in the 1960’s for a group called The Byrds (see online at - [youtu.be/W4ga\\_M5Zdn4](https://youtu.be/W4ga_M5Zdn4)).

The song has recently had new life breathed into it by a young recording artist Josh Turner - ([youtu.be/CKSvY4ya0Lk](https://youtu.be/CKSvY4ya0Lk)).

Many of the lines have had a resonance in these Covid times but the line “a time you may embrace and a time to refrain from embracing” has had a special poignancy.

You may be less familiar with the fact that the song comes from the book of Ecclesiastes in the Bible. The writer of the song, Pete Seeger, even acknowledges this.

Currently life is turning- hopefully away from lockdown to fewer restrictions where greeting with an embrace or kiss is allowed. Summer too, is a time of turning, where children turn off from school and hopefully relax. For those fortunate enough to take holiday, being away from home, travelling and exploring new places, can be a form of turning towards things which are life enhancing and restorative.

Many of you will be aware that we have recently experienced our own turning at St Laurence with Reverend Richard Bubbers retiring last month. He and his wife Sally are turning towards a new life. Just as he has felt it right to turn towards new things, we at St Laurence turn towards new things too. One of those is a period without a priest

and the other is the process of finding a replacement. When Richard came, we turned from having a whole time Rector to sharing one with Faith at Work Worcestershire (FWW). FWW is a multi-denomination charity which promotes chaplaincy support to the workplace. You may have come across them and we have been blessed to have Richard bringing something of that work into St Laurence. We have also been blessed by having associate chaplains as part of our congregation. With Richard’s wife Sally moving, we faced losing one but happily Phillipa Brakes has just been commissioned as an associate chaplain too.

As we turn towards a time of seeking and finding a new person as priest, we are also turning towards working more closely with another local Church in a similar position – St Leonard’s Beoley. The new post holder will be priest to both Parishes (see page 4 for details of this post).

As we look back with grateful thanks to God for all he has done through Richard and Sally, we recognise how work chaplaincy is now an important part of our church. Six and a half years ago we would not have predicted that turn of events! So now my question is this - as we turn I wonder what God has ahead for us we can’t (yet) see? As the song goes there is a “time to every purpose under Heaven” and I both wonder, and am excited to find out, what that will be. As we move forwards, may our eyes be firmly fixed on Jesus who knows the turns ahead. Why not give us a try and join with us as we turn?

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## Vicar wanted for Alvechurch & Beoley

*From the Diocese of Worcester website...*

We seek a priest to take responsibility for two churches - St Leonard's Beoley and St Laurence Alvechurch, both on the edges of Redditch. You will need to be flexible, adaptable, and open to exploring new ideas and ministering collaboratively across parish boundaries. We are committed to growing as kingdom people, and look forward with hope to exciting possibilities emerging as we work more closely together. Our new vicar will be :-

\* approachable, with energy, compassion, a sense of humour and a commitment to mission and outreach;

\* outward facing in our communities to encourage and inspire young people and their families to become active members of our church families;

\* someone with a deep personal faith, integrity, honesty, humility, and courage to challenge the status quo - with a passion for evangelism and the skills to lead us in the work needed to grow our churches.

\* We desire to step out further in faith and commit wholeheartedly to our vision to serve Christ in our communities, and need teaching, guidance and leadership to achieve this. Can you help us to :-

\* bring more people to Christ;

\* overcome uncertainties related to change;

\* use wisely finance accrued through legacies to grow ministry and mission?

Then please read our profile to see if God might be calling you to join us.

Download the parish profile from the link on the Diocese website - <https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/job-vacancies/vicar-alvechurch-and-beoley.php>

### **Application forms and details from:**

The Bishop's Office, The Old Palace, Deansway, Worcester  
WR1 2JE

Email: [bishop.worcester@cofe-worcester.org.uk](mailto:bishop.worcester@cofe-worcester.org.uk)

**Closing Date: 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

**Interviews will be held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

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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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## New Bishop's Adviser for Spirituality

*Bishop John has appointed Mary Flitcroft as his new Adviser for Spirituality. Mary will take over from Sue Perry, who is stepping down from 1 August.*

Mary originally trained as a primary school teacher, working for 25 years in Birmingham and the Black Country. She left teaching seven years ago and built on a degree in ceramics completed in 1991 by becoming a ceramic artist, producing both abstract and traditional pottery pieces. Creating a set of Stations of the Cross was a key moment in her own journey of spirituality.

Mary said: *"My work with ceramics is like a prayer or a form of deep meditation and that's really important to me. Making the Stations of the Cross helped me to understand more deeply how art can serve contemplation and so it has been moving for me to see them used with liturgy in churches across Birmingham, in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, and in Sarum College where I led Holy Week reflections based around them."*

Mary completed training to become a Spiritual Director in the Diocese of Birmingham and after moving to our diocese, where she worships at St Mary's, Oldswinford, she met with Sue to apply to be on the register of Spiritual Directors here. *"When the pandemic struck, I spoke to Sue about helping the Spiritual Directors connect with each other. We set up a small group which meets regularly to share in prayerful reflection of the scriptures through Lectio Divina"*.

Mary will be responsible for maintaining and developing the Diocesan Spiritual Director's Register, and, through the Spirituality Network, hopes to connect all those with an interest in spirituality. She will continue to develop links with those who organise pilgrimages, retreats, quiet days and reflective prayer gatherings and with the religious houses and communities within the Diocese.

*"Our Spiritual Directors are such an amazing resource and they are there for everyone and anyone. Over the past year or so, people have been through so much and Spiritual Directors can help people reflect on this as they are trained and skilled in compassionate listening. It is through prayer and contemplation that we allow the love of God to really grow and that's when everything changes."*

Mary can be contacted via email at -  
[maryflitcroft@live.co.uk](mailto:maryflitcroft@live.co.uk)



## Spiritual resources during Covid-19

You will also find a link to resources for personal prayer, reflection and worship on the home page of our website - [www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org](http://www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org)

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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## Join the journey to COP26 during August

COP26 is the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference, to be held in Glasgow from 1 to 12 November. Christians will be standing together with the global community to ensure the UK Government responds urgently to the global climate emergency.

From 13 - 24 August, young people from our diocese and the Diocese of Gloucester will walk through our diocese from Tewkesbury to Birmingham as part of the Young Christian Climate Network relay. This pilgrimage started in Truro Cathedral near the venue for the G7 conference and continues all the way to Glasgow for COP26.

Rachel Mander, a young Christian and the relay co-leader, said: *"We stand in solidarity with people and places that are being plunged into debt and poverty because of climate change. More carbon emissions mean more disease, more food insecurity and more poverty. We will not let the UK government host summits on our doorstep only to hear more talk and no action."*

Routes of about 10 miles per day have been planned by the Dioceses of Gloucester and Worcester, for families, young and older adults of all denominations and none, on national footpath networks. All are welcome to join for part or all of the pilgrimage, which will link up with the main relay at Birmingham Cathedral. The journey to the COP26 conference is an unmissable opportunity for sharing ideas, reflections, challenges and commitments. There is still time to commit to walk or cycle the miles from your home to Glasgow before November. Join our Journey with us on Facebook -

[www.facebook.com/groups/journeywithuscop26](https://www.facebook.com/groups/journeywithuscop26)



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# Leaves of hope at Worcester Cathedral



*During August, Worcester Cathedral is hosting The Leaves of the Trees, an installation of 5,000 steel 'Hope' leaves, as a reflective memorial to the effects of the pandemic.*

The installation has been designed to honour those who have lost their lives, but also to allow everyone to take a moment to contemplate what we have been through and to think about loved ones. Designed and produced by internationally renowned sculptor and artist, Peter Walker, the installation features a sycamore maple leaf, which was chosen specifically for its symbolism of strength, protection, eternity and clarity.

The leaves will be laid out on the Cathedral floor, creating a beautiful impression of autumn leaves fallen from the trees. Appearing as though naturally scattered by the wind, the leaves collectively symbolise both what has transpired in the past and what is to come in the future.

The exhibition will be available to visit during normal Cathedral visiting hours until Tuesday 31 August. Further information is available on the Cathedral's website - [www.worcestercathedral.co.uk](http://www.worcestercathedral.co.uk)

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# Update on in-person services in church and on-line services



Our August edition of The Grapevine went to press before the official announcement on 19th July regarding the ending of the lockdown restrictions. We are therefore planning the following limited in-person services in August, subject to current safety restrictions:

**9.30am** - Family worship services, with communion on 1 August (led by Revd Richard Clark).

**11:15 am** - Morning Prayer, with communion on 1 August (Revd Dick Johnson) and 15 August (Revd Paul Lawlor).

## The future of our online services

At the PCC meeting on Tuesday 29 June, it was agreed that currently no further recorded services on YouTube should be planned beyond 18 July.

There have been over 75 services since the first lockdown in March 2020, and through the height of the lockdown we have been able to connect with more people in these recorded services than we were in our in person services before the lockdown. Messages of thanks and appreciation have come not only from local people but also from places as far afield as Australia. Our recorded services have played a vital role in helping to keep our church family connected and supported during this unprecedented time.

The PCC give a huge thank you particularly to Mark Linton and Martin Allen, together with the rest of their working group (Sarah Linton, Helena Allen, and Richard and Sally Bubbers) for all the time and effort they have put into the planning, editing and producing of these online services. The PCC also thank all those who have contributed to the music, the readings and the prayers, as well as the talks.

All our recorded services from Easter 2020 onwards will continue to be on our YouTube channel for viewing.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in making all this possible!

You can find the channel by either searching on YouTube for ***“St Laurence Alvechurch”***, or via the direct link - [www.youtube.com/channel UCVQ6tgn7g6qT7vJ1Rh3vxpq](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVQ6tgn7g6qT7vJ1Rh3vxpq)

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



# Time off for good behaviour



*Robert Jones, Archdeacon of Worcester writes...*

I'm getting the sense that we're all looking for time off after such a long time of good behaviour! We have learned to be self-consciously safe in the way we interact - in the shops, in church, at home and at work. We've made a pretty good job of obeying the rules, following the guidance, and thinking everything through so carefully. Now we'd like some time off, and I think we've earned it.

We have learned a whole new vocabulary. I don't remember social distancing before March last year, and now we all talk about having been jabbed. We have learned to appreciate little things more, such as that kind phone call, or the encouraging wave. We have celebrated key events in a low-key way – at some personal cost in some cases; but in many ways returning to the essence of them, be it the wedding, the funeral, the baptism. We have learned to adapt and keep things simple.

There will, of course, be some serious unfinished business, most of all in the area of death and grieving. We will need to give ourselves time and be gentle with one another. For what strikes me is that we have had to face our frailty. We human beings, though capable of much, are fragile. When Paul wrote to the sometimes fractious Christians of Corinth, he said, *'We have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.'* Clay jars are fragile: Corinthian clay was, it seems, particularly so, and more likely to crack. Cracked pots were no good for holding wine, for example, but brilliant for holding light, making a good lantern.

Paul suggests that we are those fragile containers, and yet are all worthy of being bearers of God's light. Fragility can still contain much love. So in this month of August let's give ourselves a bit of time off for good behaviour, time to lick our wounds, acknowledge our frailty, and wonder at so much love revealed in such tough times.

## Friendship Club of Barnt Green

*Michael Davenport writes...*

The Friendship Club of Barnt Green meets monthly on the second Tuesday at the Friends Meeting House, Sandhills Road , Barnt Green at 2.15pm

On 10th August, Anthony Green will be speaking about *'Arrow Valley Flowing through History'*. Visitors £3 to include tea and biscuits. For more details telephone Rosalind on 0121 445 0598.

# 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:

**Tranter Avenue — 1 August**

**Warbank Close — 8 August**

**Weatheroak Hill — 15 August**

**Willow Brook Road — 22 August**

**Withybed Close — 29 August**



# Thoughts in a Covid World

*Philippa Brakes writes...*

Now that our lives are freer for the time being it seems appropriate to end these Covid articles.

I pray that they have been of some comfort to those who have struggled over the last many months. May God bless us all as we reunite with family, friends and colleagues. We don't know what the future holds, but we do know that with you Lord alongside us and with the kindness of those around us, we can face whatever lies ahead.

Because of you Lord, we can go into the future, not with nervousness and resignation, but with hope and a sense of peace. Thank you Lord for your constant love and support and we hold up all our brothers and sisters around the world who are still suffering. May your peace and healing reign.

# From The Registers



## Marriages

*Those whom God has joined together*

5 June

Mark Dixon & Emmily O'Keefe

26 June

James Harper & Emily Jackson

# Who's who

Rector	To be confirmed, The Rectory, 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
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 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

Graham Clark	Mick Fletcher
Bob Dale	Janet Wright
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
Sue Lambert	

# Calendar for AUGUST



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)

Saturday 14 **SEPTEMBER 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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