

The Grapevine

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ST LAURENCE CHURCH ALVECHURCH



Farewell and Happy Retirement

JULY 2021

Online at 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) 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).

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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Sue Phillips Wardle writes...

Time to say Goodbye

When I was first married, we lived in a new housing estate in Lancashire. Since everyone was new there was nobody in the street who took it upon themselves to offer a welcome to newcomers. We certainly didn't have the confidence to take the initiative, so it took a long time to get to know people, even to find out their names. Opposite our house lived 'See ya' Thursday'. I don't think that in the three years we lived there we ever got to know the name of this middle-aged couple. We always called them 'See ya' Thursday' because every week we heard them saying a protracted goodbye to a regular visitor, the hum of conversation on the doorstep went on and on, finally ending with a cheery 'See ya' Thursday'. Since then, I've found that some goodbyes are long drawn-out affairs, some are brief and perfunctory, and some are full of warmth and tenderness.

One of the young people in my family studied photography at college. For her dissertation she created a photo-journal of a visit to Bergerac. We have a lovely picture of a French market in our kitchen, but the image that most intrigued me when I saw her portfolio was of an elderly lady standing on a balcony waving goodbye to someone off camera. The look on her face said so much. It said 'Your visit has been precious', 'I'll miss you', 'I wonder if we'll ever meet again'. I won't go into the back story, but I give this illustration because at St Laurence's church we are preparing ourselves to say goodbye to our rector Richard Bubbers and to his wife, Sally.

By the time you read this most of the farewells will have taken place, and as I write we await news about the lifting of Covid rules, so we don't yet know precisely what forms our farewells can take. Will we be wearing face masks and keeping social distance, will numbers be limited by whatever version of the 'rule of six' is in place at the time? But what I do know is that the 'look' on the face of the church will be more like that of the French lady on the balcony, and that we won't be shouting a jolly 'See ya Thurs-

day' across the neighbourhood. We will instead be saying a thoughtful and thankful farewell. Richard and Sally joined us in 2015, and after a three-year period of what the church calls interregnum (what an odd word to use in this context), we welcomed them with relief. Ensuring that the church runs to a theme of '*business as usual*' places a lot of additional responsibility on a lot of people.* So, it is a wonderful moment when the search for a new incumbent comes to an end and the welcoming phase begins.

Expectations are high on both sides during that initial getting-to-know-you period. Richard and Sally brought so much life experience with them when they came to Alvechurch. They were new to the village and to the church, but they quickly identified key aspects of church life. I'm saying they, though of course Richard is the incumbent, but from the start it was clear that he and Sally were a strong team. Sally's counselling background brought a sensitivity to the pastoral side of church life, Richard's previous career as a lawyer brought a precision to administration and structures whilst his deep and intelligent knowledge of the scriptures was a well from which Richard has drawn throughout his time as rector.

And now it is time for them to move on, and we are left saying goodbye: '*Richard and Sally, your time amongst us has been precious, we will miss you and we wish you well in the next phase of your lives.*'

On page 11 you can see the poem I wrote for their first Christmas amongst us. I have yet to write my farewell poem. Instead, I hope I speak for many when I say: Thank you for coming amongst us, Thank you for all you have given as you have served the community of St Laurence over the past 6 years: your leadership, wisdom, service, sensitivity, faith and love. We will remember you with respect, fondness and gratitude.

Richard and Sally, Go Well!

*for more on this see the article by Graham Clark and Mick Fletcher on 9.

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Thoughts in a Covid World

Philippa Brakes writes...

By the time you read this, we will know what Boris has decided about "freedom day". Eighteen months ago none of us would have believed that the entire tenor of our everyday lives would be so totally out of our own control. For what seems a very long time a group of politicians and scientists has decided when, where and how we see our nearest and dearest or go on holiday or conduct our work lives. Only many enquiries and the clearer vision of history will show whether or not their decisions have been helpful and wise or a lasting problem for the country and its people.

Many people are still reeling physically, financially and emotionally from the effects of this horrible virus and many have turned their thoughts to a wiser authority, one who really does know all our futures and what is best for us. Attendance at online church services have rocketed which is wonderful, as people take their first, tentative steps towards a relationship with God. What better way to head into the unknown than to put our hands into the hand of one who knows all, forgives all and loves beyond all measure. In the words of Kari Jobe in the lovely song Be still my soul:

In you I rest, in you I found my hope

In you I trust; you never let me go.

I place my life within your hands alone.

Be still my soul.

Amen indeed and I trust that, whatever the future holds for each of us, if we turn to God who will never abandon us, never let us down, we will know his peace deep in our souls and be safe and free.

Alvechurch WI

Pam Horsfield writes...

Our June Zoom speaker was 'The Baroness of Bolsover' who came dressed in Victorian costume and guided us through the etiquette and history of holding Victorian afternoon tea parties. She not only instructed us on how to use our napkins and hold our tea cups correctly, but also slipped in interesting historical facts. e.g. Did you know that 'high tea' was served from a high table!?! This was a light hearted meeting and members enjoyed Linda's talk.

As usual, the third Monday of the month is when we take our short walks around the village and, hopefully, followed by tea somewhere depending on numbers and venues open. For more information contact 729 5877 or 445 4631.

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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

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



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Lent appeal raises almost £10,000

Thank you to everyone who has donated to Bishop John's Lent appeal for the Diocese of Peru, which has raised almost £10,000 for our partner diocese.

The money will support the work of churches across Peru, which has been hit extremely hard by the Coronavirus Pandemic. The poorest have inevitably been the hardest hit and it is in these communities that most diocesan work takes place.



Over the past year, the Diocese of Peru has had almost no income and clergy have been receiving reduced stipends at best. Some months they have simply not been paid.

Chair of our Peru Task Group, Phil Bradford said: *"Peru continues to suffer with ongoing lockdowns and lack of access to vaccinations. There is no real equivalent to our welfare state, which means that many people have faced the impossible choice between observing lockdown and earning enough for food and basic essentials. In addition, the country is about to hold the second round of it's Presidential election and is currently very polarised. Bishop Jorge has particularly asked for our prayers for Peru at the moment."*

In response to the donations given during Lent, Bishop Jorge said: *"On behalf of the whole Anglican Church of Peru, please tell Bishop John and all the churches in the Diocese of Worcester that we are very grateful for this generous gift and for your solidarity with us at this difficult time. It is great news at Pentecost."*

It is still possible to donate via the online giving page - www.stewardship.org.uk/pages/Bishops_lent_appeal_Peru

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

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/online-church-services-across-the-diocese.php

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

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Introduction to the Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer



The Eternal Wall of Answered prayer has planning permission to be built just outside Birmingham.

Eternal Wall will be a huge, thought-provoking piece of public art, aiming to kindle conversations about prayer. The iconic structure will be constructed using one million bricks, each brick featuring an answered prayer. This Christian landmark will make hope visible by digitally linking visitors with our database of one million answered prayers, using interactive technology and a bespoke app. Visitors will be able to use their smart device, holding it against any brick to read the individual answered prayers.

Built near Coleshill on the outskirts of Birmingham, Eternal Wall will stand at 169 feet, eclipsing the size of the Angel of the North, and is expected to attract 300,000 visitors each year. 500,000 journeys will see Eternal Wall every week from the M6, M42, HS2, and flight paths from Birmingham Airport.



Those behind the Eternal wall say: *"We believe Eternal Wall will give people and communities hope that God hears them, answers prayer and can change circumstances. We would love visitors to be able to access answered prayers that demonstrate the full breadth of Christian experience; from different denominations, countries and points in history; workplaces and family situations. If you are part of a Christian network, whether workplace/leisure based, intercessory, educational or evangelistic, we would love to connect with you."*

Photo credit of the CGI image: Snug Architects and Renderloft.

Normal Service Will Be.....

..... maintained as far as possible

The Churchwardens write ...

When a Rector leaves a parish, to retire or to move on elsewhere, inevitably they leave a big gap. That is the situation in which we find ourselves at St Laurence with Rev Richard Bubbers retiring on July 4th. But it is at times like this that the members of the church and the support services of the wider church spring into action.

We are fortunate in St Laurence to have a good band of experienced people who can pick up many of the tasks previously handled by Richard. And we can call on ordained personnel in the surrounding area for those times when we need an ordained priest.

It will be us as Churchwardens who pick up the responsibility for ensuring that the church runs as smoothly as possible during the *'interregnum'* (the time we are without a priest, which could be last quite a time. Our last interregnum when Rev David Martin retired lasted nearly 3 years!). We can call on the support of an experienced team of worship leaders and a strong pastoral team at St Laurence. The Area Dean acts as our link man into the wider church and will coordinate that support.

It would be unrealistic to suppose that nothing will change, particularly since we are already in a period of change enforced by Covid. But we will try to ensure that the work of the church will continue, albeit maybe in different ways.

We will miss Richard greatly. His ministry has been widespread and greatly valued. He shared his time between St Laurence and Faith at Work in Worcestershire (a ministry to work places). Our new priest, when they are appointed, will share their time between St Laurence and St Leonard's Beoley.

We are laying plans to move into a new phase in the life of St Laurence Church. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has set up a group to look to the future, to draw up a profile of the parish and a person specification for the appointment of a new priest. All this in coordination with a similar group at St Leonard's. The post will be advertised nationally in the near future.

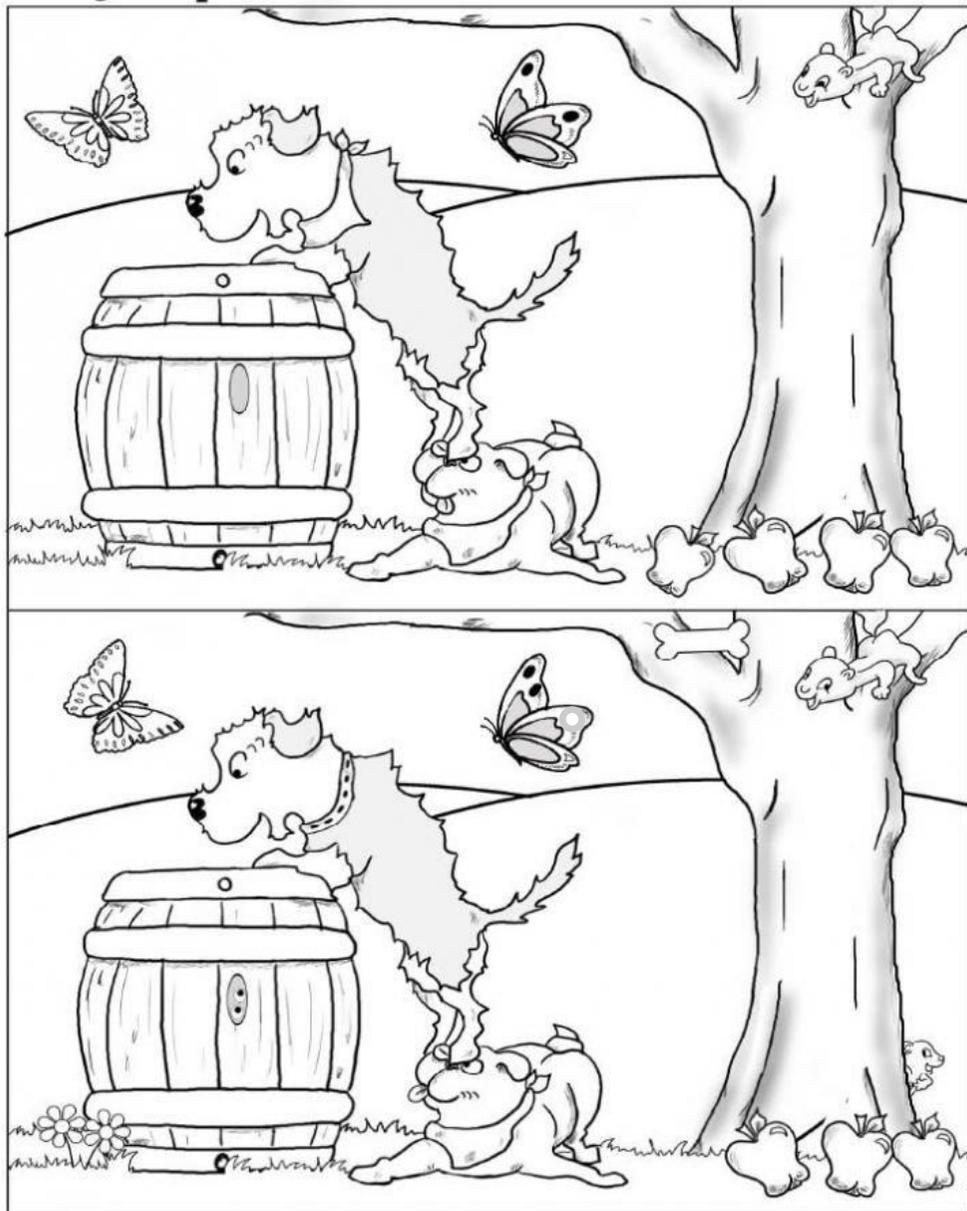
In the meantime, if you need the support of the church the contact points will remain the same. The church's phone number has not changed and Richard's email will be diverted to where it can be dealt with. Contact details are, as usual, on the inside back cover of this magazine.

This will be a time of challenge, of change and of opportunity. Please help us to ensure that *"normal service is maintained as far as possible"*.

Graham Clark and Michael Fletcher



Can you spot the 10 differences? Circle them.



Vocation - God's Call

Bishops John writes...

One of the most important – and enjoyable – roles of being a bishop is ordaining people as deacons and priests. I shall be ordaining nine new priests in the Cathedral at the beginning of July. I find it arresting to think that my predecessors – I am the 113th Bishop of Worcester – have been doing the same there for well over a thousand years.

In preparation for the ordination, it's always moving to learn from the candidates of how God has moved in their lives and they have felt his call. Very often that call has been mediated through the encouragement of others. Most people don't think that they are up to the task of serving God in any capacity and they need the prompting and help of others.

Ordination in the diocese takes place at 'Petertide' - around the feast of St Peter, when we give thanks for the 'rock' on which Jesus chose to build his church. I find Peter very encouraging – as we read the scriptures we see him '*getting it wrong*' over and over again, even having to be rebuked by Jesus as 'Satan', and then denying Jesus in his hour of need. But Jesus restored him, giving him the confidence to serve and lead.

God's call is a wonderful thing. I wonder how much you have thought about God's call on your life? You might not become a priest, but God certainly has some role in store for you which you will find gloriously fulfilling if you respond to his call. If you have found it, rejoice in it and relish it. If you have not, pray that it may be revealed to you. Only then will you experience life in abundance which Jesus yearns to give you.

Whatever you do, don't succumb to 'imposter syndrome' and think you are not up to serving God as he calls you. Remember Peter and take heart from him!

New beginnings

They came, an ordinary couple, bound together with mutual affection, quiet in anticipation of this new start; that was plain to see.

We'd been waiting, some with impatience, all with expectation, and they came.

They came with humility, expressing their desire to serve, offering their histories, responding with warmth to the welcome extended, bringing the strength of years. They came.

We met in an embrace of affinity natural and unforced, co-workers in divine mystery, mutually affirmed in shared mission, drinking from the same source, from one wine filled chalice. Together we came.

I breathe deep contemplative breaths, weariness dispelled, burden tumbling, rejoicing in harmony of purpose; soul to soul, spirit to spirit, released from responsibility to a future of shared endeavour.Come Holy Spirit, come

Sue Phillips Wardle - March 2015

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 – 1st Sunday morning prayer (Common Worship) and on 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th 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

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

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.



Ordinations 2021



This year's ordinations are being planned in the Cathedral over the weekend of 3 and 4 July. Please pray for all our candidates.

To be ordained Priest on Saturday 3 July at 2pm:

- Claire Billington serving in Peopleton and White Ladies Aston w Churchill & Spetchley & Upton Snodsbury & Broughton Hackett
 - Lindsey Coulthard serving at St Stephen Barbourne, Worcester
 - Foluso Enwerem serving at Top Church, Dudley
 - Jon Evans serving at Christ Church, Lye
 - Jessica Fellows serving at All Saints, Worcester
 - Christopher Henson serving at St John, Kidderminster
 - Rosie Moss serving at St Nicholas, Warndon, Worcester
 - Kim Topham serving in Clent and Hagley
- Carol Weston serving in the Brierley Hill team***

To be ordained Deacon on Sunday 4 July at 10.30am:

- Shaun Armstrong, to serve in the Kidderminster Ismere Team
- Melissa Beynon, to serve in the Halas Team, Halesowen
- Calum Burke, to serve at Top Church, Dudley
- Fraser Oates, to serve at All Saints Church in Worcester
- Richard Sandland, to serve in the Bromsgrove Team

Both ordination services will be led by the Bishop of Worcester, Dr John Inge alongside the Bishop of Dudley, Martin Gorick. The Revd Prebendary Chris Thorpe, vicar of the parishes of Shifnal, Sheriffhales and Tong in the Diocese of Lichfield will preach at the services.

Please note that all services will be held in accordance to the Covid regulations in place at the time and are subject to change at short notice. Numbers attending the services may need to be limited.

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:



The Holloway – 4 July

The Rise – 11 July

The Square – 18 July

Tonym Close – 25 July

Christian Aid Step Challenge Update

Veronica Rogers writes...

The challenge took place during the month of May. The St Laurence Monday group decided to step it out together so everyone could participate and succeed, and raise much needed funds for people who are living in extreme poverty and facing increasing problems caused by climate change.

Our target was collaboratively to complete 1,250,000 steps and raise £780.

Incredibly thanks to everyone's generosity we raised £1545 and completed 1,835,298 steps.

Thank you and God bless.

From The Registers



Baptisms

We welcome you into the Lord's family

22 May

Amelia Pritchett

29 May

Alfred Bell & Thomas Bell

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
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

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 JULY



Please see our church and Ark websites for details of our activities -
www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org and www.thearkalvechurch.co.uk

Wednesday 14 AUGUST 2021 GRAPEVINE GOES TO PRESS:
articles to - admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk

Text Giving for St Laurence Church

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Texts cost £10 plus one standard rate message

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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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