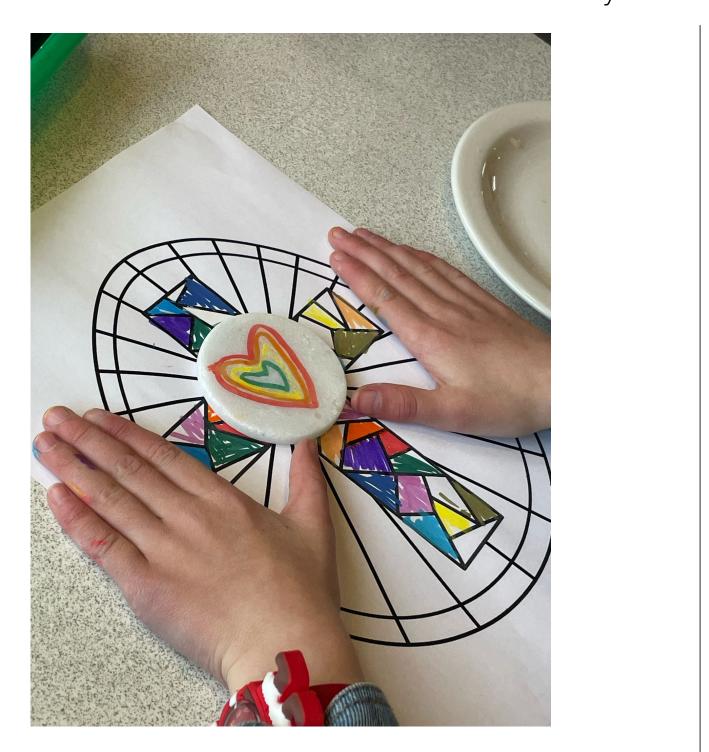
## GRAPEVINE ST LAURENCE CHURCH, ALVECHURCH July 2025



Here, everyone is welcome, valued, and loved by God and each other as we explore faith and prayer together

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## REVD GAIL WRITES...



Dear friends,

This month, I'm really pleased to share something that's been close to our hearts at St Laurence for some time: our new vision statement:

"Here, everyone is welcome, valued, and loved by God and each other as we explore faith and prayer together."

At first glance, it might look like just a few words on a page — but we hope it becomes much more than that. It's a simple but powerful way of saying who we are, what we value, and the kind of community we long to be.

#### Everyone is welcome.

That means there's a place for you, whether you're full of questions or full of faith, whether you come every week or have never stepped inside our building. Jesus showed radical hospitality — Jesus sat with people from all walks of life and broke down barriers of exclusion. We want to follow his example, offering a warm, genuine welcome to all.

#### Everyone is valued.

You matter. Not because of what you do, or what you can contribute, but because God sees you as precious. In a world that sometimes makes people feel overlooked or left out, we want to remind one another — and our wider community — that every person has dignity and worth.

#### Everyone is loved by God and each other.

At the heart of the Christian faith is the message that God loves each one of us — deeply, unconditionally. We're called to share that love, not just in words but in the way we treat one another. Loving our neighbour can be as simple as a kind word, a listening ear, or a helping hand.

#### Exploring faith and prayer together.

None of us has all the answers. Faith is a journey — a bit like setting out on a long walk with friends. We learn from each other's questions, experiences, and insights. Our vision is to be a safe place to explore and to grow, wherever you are on the journey.

#### Why does this matter?

A vision statement can help us stay true to our purpose. It's like a compass — reminding us what we're about, especially when life (and church life!) gets busy. It's also a promise to you: that we're



working hard to be a church that is genuinely open, welcoming, and loving.

If you've ever wondered what St Laurence is all about, or if you're curious but not quite sure if you belong, I'd love you to know: you are already part of the story we're telling here.

There are further articles within this edition from Revd Martin explaining the narrative behind the process of a vision statement and how we agreed ours, do read them and do hold us to account if you ever feel we are not living up to it.

You will also find information about the life of St Laurence and upcoming events. You are welcome to come and join in where you can.

With every blessing,

Roval Gail



Places of Welcome is a network of safe places where people can connect, belong and contribute.

### Free refreshmen®, including toast!



## Wednesdays

10am – 12pm

St Laurence Church and The Ark, School Lane, Alvechurch, B48 7SB



ARCHITECTURE

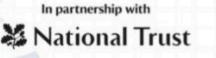
ST LAURENCE CHURCH AND THE ARK SATURDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 11.00AM TO 2.00PM FREE ENTRY

# JOIN US FOR OUR 2025 HERITAGE FUNDAY

JOIN US FOR A DAY OF FAMILY FUN WITH CHURCH AND TOWER TOURS, PRIZE DRAWS, DELICIOUS FOOD, GAMES, ICE CREAM, LIVE PERFORMANCES, FACE PAINTING, AND MORE! ADVENTURE AND SURPRISES AWAIT!

St Laurence Church and The Ark, Alvechurch, School Lane, B487SB

St Laurence Church and The Ark, Alvechurch, School Lane, B48 7SB



PEOPLE'S POSTCODE LOTTERY



### ST LAURENCE HERITAGE FUN DAY: A CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY AND HISTORY

#### Join Us for an Unforgettable Day of Fun and Heritage!

Mark your calendars and get ready for a day filled with excitement, entertainment, and a celebration of history! St Laurence Church is thrilled to invite you to our Heritage Fun Day, taking place on Saturday, 13th September 2025, from 11am to 2pm. This promises to be a truly memorable event for all ages.

#### **Restoration Works and Exclusive Tours**

We are eagerly anticipating the completion of the restoration works on the church tower and clock by September. If all goes as planned, we will be offering exclusive tours of the bell-ringing chamber. This is a rare opportunity to see behind the scenes and learn about the fascinating history of bell ringing at St Laurence. Look out for more details and booking information in our Grapevine magazine this August!



#### **Exciting Entertainment Line-Up**

Throughout the day, we have a fantastic programme of demonstrations and performances to keep you entertained:

- The Crown Meadow First School Choir will showcase their delightful harmonies.
- The Community Choir will bring their uplifting voices to the event.
- Tango Unplugged will provide captivating dance and music performances.
- Amy Greaves Dance School will mesmerise with their talented routines.
- The Midland Sinfonia will enchant with their classical melodies.
- Back by popular demand, Karen Marsh will grace the churchyard with her beautiful singing.

#### **Food and Refreshments**

No celebration is complete without delicious food! We've got you covered with:

- Refreshments and cakes served in The Ark.
- An ice cream van to cool you down.
- Manny's Eats offering tasty options for everyone.



#### Family-Friendly Fun

For children and families, there's a host of activities to enjoy:

- Games like archery and hook-a-duck.
- Face painting and free crafts to get creative.
- Bournville Boats, bigger and better than last year!

#### **Community Stalls and Competitions**

Discover local talent and creativity with community stalls and a captivating portrait display competition. Check out the Grapevine magazine for further details on entry and prizes.

#### Heritage Car Display

Don't miss the chance to see a piece of living history with an Ex-Military Land Rover on display. A perfect nod to the heritage theme of the day!

#### Why Heritage and Community Matters

St Laurence Church and The Ark stand as symbols of our shared history and the vibrant community spirit that brings us together. This Heritage Fun Day is not just about enjoying a day out—it's a celebration of the rich tapestry of stories, traditions, and connections that make St Laurence such a cherished place. By coming together, we pay homage to the generations before us while creating memories for the generations to come.

Join us on 13th September for a day that promises laughter, learning, and a sense of belonging. We can't wait to welcome you to St Laurence Church and The Ark for this spectacular celebration of heritage and community!













ST LAURENCE CHURCH HERITAGE DAY

ORTRA

OMPETITIO

How do you see the people you love? We'd love to see them through your eyes! As part of our Heritage Day celebrations, we're hosting a fun Portrait Competition—and you're invited to join in. Draw, paint, sketch, collage (or anything else creative!) a portrait of someone special to you. With five winning categories—Pre-School, KS2, KS3, Teenagers, and Adults—there's a space for everyone to shine. Get creative and show us what love looks like to you. We can't wait to see your masterpiece!

WINNERS ANNOUCED AT OUR HERITAGE DAY EVENT ON 13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER

### DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS 5<sup>™</sup>SEPTEMBER

DROP YOUR PORTRAIT INTO THE ARK, SCHOOL LANE

### TOGETHER IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

#### www.togethercofe.org.uk

The Church of England is on a journey towards greater inclusion, support, and shared learning, and Together is an initiative that brings us all along on that journey.

Together is a national network created to encourage and support all those who seek a Church that is more inclusive—where everyone, regardless of their sexuality, gender identity, or background, can find a home and a welcome. Its vision is rooted in deep faith, prayer, and the conviction that we are all part of the body of Christ.

Although Together was born out of the ongoing conversations around the Church's Living in Love and Faith (LLF) process, it's much more than that. It's about building communities of support and friendship across the Church of England, equipping us all to stand alongside one another with grace, compassion, and hope. Over the coming year, as LLF remains a significant focus at General Synod, this will naturally be a major part of the work of Together—but it's important to remember that Together is also about helping us grow into a Church that better reflects the inclusive love of God.

Together is open to everyone—lay and clergy alike—who want to help build a more inclusive Church.

Here in the Worcester Diocese, Revd Gail is the local Together co-ordinator, helping to build a network of support. If you'd like to receive regular newsletters about the work of Together and be part of a supportive community here in Worcester, please do get in touch with Revd Gail at <u>revdgail@icloud.com</u> to be added to the mailing list.

We're also looking forward to a local Together event in October, when Nic Tall and others will join us to share more about this important work. Watch this space for details!

Let's continue to walk together, seeking a Church that truly welcomes everyone.



### KEEPING ST LAURENCE THRIVING – HOW YOU HELP

It's easy to walk past St Laurence and see a building that's always there -a place of history, beauty, and peace at the heart of our community.

Every day, St Laurence opens its doors to more than just Sunday worship. Donations help us maintain the building, pay the bills, and keep the churchyard safe and cared for. They also support outreach initiatives like Places of Welcome, where anyone can drop in for a friendly chat and a cuppa, and Movie Mondays, which bring people together for film, friendship, and conversation.

None of this happens by accident. It's all made possible by the generosity of people like you — those who see the church as an important part of the community, whether or not they come every Sunday. Every donation, big or small, helps us keep our doors open and our welcome warm.

If you'd like to support St Laurence, there are simple ways to do so:

- Regular giving through the Parish Giving Scheme makes a big impact and helps us plan for the future.
- One-off donations are always welcome and if you Gift Aid them, the church receives an extra 25% from the government at no extra cost to you.
- You'll find QR codes below that link directly to our secure giving pages easy to use, even from your phone.

Every gift, every prayer, every bit of support helps us keep the light of St Laurence burning bright for everyone in the community — not just today, but for the years to come.



Organ Fund



General Fund



Churchyard Fund

### HERE, EVERYONE IS WELCOME, VALUED, AND LOVED BY GOD AND EACH OTHER AS WE EXPLORE FAITH AND PRAYER TOGETHER

Can you recognize or work out which organisations these vision statements are from?

"To enrich people's lives with programmes and services that inform, educate and entertain."

"Here, everyone is welcome, valued, and loved by God and each other as we explore faith and prayer together."

"To be a company that inspires and fulfils your curiosity."

"To refresh the world...To inspire moments of optimism and happiness...To create value and make a difference."

"A Christian presence in your community"

"The maintenance of international peace and security."

"Bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world. If you have a body, you are an athlete."

Vision statements can help an organisation explain its reason for existence and what it is trying to do. They can help a brand remain in our thinking.

Two of these come from faith communities – I wonder if you can say which is from St Laurence??

Over the past eighteen months, a small group from St Laurence, under the guidance of Revd Gail, an external facilitator, and friends from St Leonards Church Beoley, have been working to describe what the churches are for. We began writing a vision statement for our New Worshipping Communities (our Café church and Tots and Toddlers services). Over time, we realised that the vision statement could be adapted to describe the church's wider purpose and outreach.

### HERE, EVERYONE IS WELCOME, VALUED, AND LOVED BY GOD AND EACH OTHER AS WE EXPLORE FAITH AND PRAYER TOGETHER

The Church Councils of both St Laurence and St Leonards Church, Beoley, have recently voted to adopt this vision statement:

#### "Here, everyone is welcome, valued, and loved by God and each other as we explore faith and prayer together."

It is our prayer that it becomes more than words on paper but gets into our very beings. We want it to be a foundation for all we do, say, and become. We pray that the words will be meaningful for people in touch with St Laurence.

We know it is a big thing to say, and we know we will not always get it right. However, we do want anyone who comes to a church event or service to know they will be welcome. The vision statement will also be a reference point for how we decide to do things. Over the next few months, we will use the vision statement more in our communications and contacts.

You might say that when our founder (Jesus) talked with people around him, he did not use vision statements -true! Jesus did, though, when asked what the most important commandment was, say:

"To love God with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself " (Mark 12:33).

We are trying to follow his example of love and welcome.

Revd Martin

Answers (The BBC) St Laurence Church (Sony) (Coca-Cola). (Church of England) (United Nations) (Nike)



The Ark

## AFTERNOON TEA

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2.30pm



### A selection of sandwiches

Gluten Free Sandwiches can be pre-booked

&

## A selection of cakes including scones.

Unlimited tea and coffee and with an option to upgrade to include a glass of prosecco.

#### **ADVANCE BOOKING ONLY**

£12 per person / £15 with glass of prosecco Please contact CharlotteO121 447 7955 admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk

### THE STORY OF AFTERNOON TEA: A DELICIOUS TRADITION

Who doesn't love a good afternoon tea? Finger sandwiches, cakes, and a steaming pot of tea — it's a treat that many of us enjoy. But where did this delightful tradition come from?

The story goes back to the early 1840s, when Anna, the 7th Duchess of Bedford, found that she often felt a bit hungry in the late afternoon. At that time, people generally ate just two meals a day: breakfast and dinner. So, to bridge the gap, Anna asked for a pot of tea and a little something to eat — bread, butter, and cake. She began inviting friends to join her, and soon this simple idea became a fashionable social event.

By the late 19th century, afternoon tea had spread throughout the British Isles. It evolved into a formal affair, with delicate sandwiches, scones, and a wonderful array of cakes — all enjoyed on beautiful china and in fine surroundings.

Afternoon tea also became a way of showing hospitality and kindness, something that's always been close to the heart of Christian community. Hospitality is at the core of our faith — it's about making space for others, sharing what we have, and letting everyone know they are valued. Jesus often shared meals with his friends and strangers alike, showing that food and drink can bring people together and create opportunities for welcome and conversation.

So, whether it's in a grand tearoom or at a simple church hall, afternoon tea remains a way of sharing time, food, and friendship — a reminder that we're not meant to journey alone. It's a chance to pause, chat, and share life's sweetness.

We're delighted to be offering our very own Afternoon Tea event at St Laurence — a time to relax, enjoy delicious treats, and catch up with friends old and new. Come along, bring a neighbour, and let's share together in the spirit of welcome that Anna (and Jesus himself) would have approved of!

Tickets can be purchased via the church office.

We can't wait to see you there.





### MONDAYS

AVAILABLE TO HIRE FROM 1PM - 3PM

AMY GREAVES - DANCE CIRQUE 4PM-6PM

TANGO UNPLUGGED 7PM -11PM (2ND AND 4TH OF EACH MONTH)

### TUESDAYS

#### **AVAILABLE TO HIRE 9AM -4PM**

AMY GREAVES DANCE 4.15 -7.30PM

KARATE 6.15PM - 8.15PM

ADULT IRISH DANCING 8PM -9PM

### WEDNESDAYS

PLACES OF WELCOME 10AM -12PM

YOGA 1PM-2.15PM MEDITATION 2.25PM-3PM YOGA 7PM-8.15PM

### THURSDAYS

AVAILABLE TO HIRE FROM 12 NOON

TOTS AND TODDLERS 9.30AM -11AM

MOVE 2B FIT 7PM - 8PM

ADULT IRISH DANCING 8PM -9PM

### FRIDAYS

AVAILABLE TO HIRE ALL DAY SATURDAYS

AMY GREAVES DANCE 8AM -3.15PM

AVAILABLE TO HIRE FROM 4PM

<u>SUNDAYS</u>

**AVAILABLE TO HIRE FROM 1PM** 

### Discover The Ark: A Welcoming Space at the Heart of Alvechurch

Tucked beside the church in the historic village of Alvechurch, The Ark is an awardwinning community venue that's full of life throughout the week. From baby showers to birthday parties, support groups to social gatherings, The Ark offers a beautifully maintained space with something for everyone.

Whether you're planning a Baptism party, a retreat day, a creative workshop or simply need somewhere to gather, The Ark is the ideal venue. With a large hall featuring a wooden sprung dance floor, a fully fitted catering kitchen, and an upstairs lounge-style meeting room, it's both practical and comfortable. There's ample free parking, excellent disabled access (including a lift and ground-floor accessible toilet), babychanging facilities, and over 100 padded chairs available free with your booking.

We're home to a wide variety of groups and activities, and as you'll see from the timetable on our flyer, The Ark is a vibrant and well-used space.

#### While availability is limited, we do currently have Mondays 1pm - 4pm / Tuesdays 9am -4pm / Thursdays from 12 noon / Fridays all day / Saturdays from 4pm / Sundays from 1pm -we'd love to welcome some new regular groups or occasional bookings.

Our prices are competitive, and we're always happy to chat through your requirements. Regular groups and public events also benefit from free promotion on our website and noticeboards—just bring along your posters or flyers!

Don't just take our word for it. One recent hirer shared:

"Thank you so much for letting us use the hall this weekend. We had the best party and she had a wonderful time. So many people commented on what a beautiful space it is and the facilities were incredible. I was blown away in all honesty." – June 2024

If you're looking for a friendly, flexible venue with great facilities in the heart of the community, look no further than The Ark.

For bookings or enquiries, contact us on 0121 447 7955 or admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk

## What's on at The Ark In July



Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> of July Tango Unplugged - a fresh look at Argentine Tango

On Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup> of July at 2.30pm please join us for Afternoon Tea here at the Ark , enjoy a selection of sandwiches , cakes , unlimited tea and coffee and even a glass of prosecco £12 a ticket / £15 to include prosecco Tickets available from the Ark office - Last few remaining tickets available don't miss out

#### Have you visited our website recently?

The easiest place to find details about everything that's happening here at The Ark is via our website - <u>https://www.thearkalvechurch.co.uk/</u>

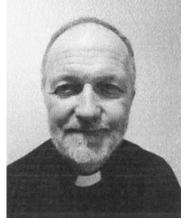
### Contacts for class and group regular events

Alvechurch Historical Society - Anne - 0121 445 5955 Karate - Chris 0756 4604613 Adult Irish dancing - donnagriffinacademy.com Places of Welcome - Charlotte - 0121 447 7955 Wednesday Yoga and mediation - Sally - myyogamind.co.uk Hillside WI - Pat - 0121 628 4121 Tots & Toddlers - Sarah- sarah100work@gmail.com Move 2Bfit - Cliff- CliffHocoxfitness on Facebook Mini-Athletics - Steph - www.miniathletics.com Tango - Andy - andy.adamson@coolpilates.co.uk AGSOD - Amy Greaves -amygreavesschoolofdance@gmail.com

If you have an event or celebration and are looking to hire the Ark please contact Charlotte in the office to enquire about any availability that we may have

## REVD MARTIN WRITES...

The fourth word in our new vision statement is "welcome," an important word to have near the start. When writing the vision statement, we thought long and hard about the meaning of the words. So, what does welcome mean? It can be a bit hard to define. I recently read of someone who visited people they knew, though not well. The welcome and hospitality created a unique encounter as they entered the door. It was almost as though the welcome, hospitality,



and the writer's gratitude created a third person present. There was something special about that welcome.

Feeling welcome may come from a smile, a handshake, or a hug. We remember welcomes after long journeys or a long time apart. Being made welcome can be the host getting things "just right" for us with a cup of tea, a meal, or a hot bath! Recently some of us have been made welcome by visiting the gardens of people living locally. Being welcomed into a much-loved garden, a new home or flat for the first time always feels special.

I suspect we have all felt what it is to think we are not welcome, too! The unwelcome reply ringing a doorbell, the person who is more interested in their friend or phone than in us.

We can also feel uncomfortable in group settings. Fitting into a group can be difficult if we do not have the "right" social background, accent, skin colour, or clothing.

Welcome is essential for all these human reasons. It is also crucial because Jesus welcomed us into God's family. That welcome to everyone, whoever they are, drives us to welcome others. Jesus often welcomed those excluded from communities for various reasons. We should, too.

As Revd. Gail mentioned, we want to be welcoming and work hard to live up to our vision statement. That starts before you arrive with our media outreach. It is there with the people who greet you at the door. It carries on in what we do in a service or group, such as Places of Welcome, and as you leave. If we do not get it right, your feedback is very welcome.

### CHURCHYARD CARE UPDATE: A NEW CHAPTER FOR THE OLD SECTION OF THE CHURCHYARD

Over the years, our churchyard has been lovingly tended by a wonderful team of volunteers. In more recent times, we've also been especially grateful for the support of the Probation Service. Their efforts have made an invaluable difference, helping to ensure that this sacred space remains a place of peace, memory, and connection for our whole community.

As shared in the June edition of Grapevine, government cuts to the Probation Service mean that sadly, they are unable to assist us this year. Despite our best efforts, we have not yet been able to find enough local volunteers to cover the full scope of the work.

We remain deeply committed to caring for the churchyard as best we can. A small but faithful team—currently just three people—continues to meet on Monday mornings (10am–12pm, April to October) to maintain the more actively managed areas. Led by Brock Brakes, this team undertakes mowing, hedge trimming, and general upkeep such as clearing brambles and nettles. We are so thankful for their dedication, but more help is urgently needed to continue this important work. If you are able to support this team in any way, please contact Charlotte in the church office and she will pass your details on.

Faced with the current gap in support, we have made the decision to designate the older section of the churchyard under the Caring for God's Acre scheme.

#### What does this mean?

Caring for God's Acre is a national movement that values churchyards and burial grounds as places of sanctuary, history, and biodiversity. It encourages us to see these spaces not only as places of remembrance but also as habitats that support wildlife and the natural world.

By taking this approach in the older section, we are committing to a lighter-touch method of maintenance—allowing grass and wildflowers to grow, supporting pollinators and birds, and protecting the unique ecology of the area. We hope, subject to volunteer support, to mow a central pathway through the full length of the older section from the roadway, with side paths along as many rows as possible. If we do gain enough help, we plan to divide the area into five zones that could then be managed more easily.

Our churchyard team has also discussed two further possibilities. First, we would like to allocate two set mornings a year for a community-wide tidy-up, inviting local people to join us in mowing and clearing. Second, we are preparing a proposal to find support for maintaining and enhancing the wilding potential of the area in between these bigger efforts. Both options will depend entirely on volunteer support, as we do not have the financial resources for paid help.

We know this will feel like a change—perhaps even a little sad for some. If you wish to continue tending a loved one's grave in this area, please do so; it remains your special place to remember and care for.

A gentle reminder: the ground in the older section is uneven in places. Please take care when visiting, and let us know if you notice anything needing particular attention.

Although we had hoped for a different outcome, we see this new chapter as an opportunity—to celebrate God's creation, and to honour those who have gone before us. We hope this new approach will foster a deeper sense of respect, connection, and care for all God's creatures.

If you would like to know more, or are able to help in any way—even occasionally please do get in touch. If you would like to support the churchyard financially, you'll find a QR code on our giving page (in this magazine) where donations can be designated specifically for the churchyard. For regular donations, please contact our Treasurer, Michelle Read—her details are listed in the Our Team section.

Together, let's continue to make our churchyard a place of peace, reflection, and hope for all.

#### St Laurence Church and The Ark, Alvechurch

### ARK TOTS AND TODDLERS

A friendly play enviroment for babies and little ones under 5, with their parents or carers.

A time to play and chat, with each session ending in singing time.

#### Thursday 9:30am - 11am - Termtime

£2 per session, per family, with as many drinks and biscuits as you like

For more information contact sarah100work@gmail.com.



### TOTS AND TODDLERS

Ark Tots and Toddlers meets every Thursday during term time from 9.30am to 11am at St Laurence—a friendly and welcoming space for adults with babies and pre-school children.

It's a Place of Welcome where you'll find toys, snacks, conversation, and community.

Once a month, we finish the morning with Tots Worship at 11am in church—a short, interactive time of Bible story and song especially for little ones and their grown-ups. All are welcome!

### ST LAURENCE CHURCH DIARY JULY 2025

What's going at St Laurence Church, The Ark and Alvechurch Community

Open Church	Wedne	sday 2 <sup>nd</sup> July 10.00am -12pm
Places of Welcome	Wednes	day 2 <sup>nd</sup> July 10.00am - 12pm
Ark Tots and Toddlers		Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 9.30am
A BCP Service of Holy Communion St Leonard's Church, Beoley		Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 10am
Wedding Preparation and Bo	okings	at St Leonard's, Beoley Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 6-8pm
St Leonard's Church Summer	Fete	Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> July 10am
Family Communion with Ark T	ime	Sunday 6th July 9:15am
Morning Worship		Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> July 11.15am
Open Church	Wednesday 9th July 10.00am -12pm	
Places of Welcome	Wednes	day 9 <sup>th</sup> July 10.00am - 12pm
Ark Tots and Toddlers		Thursday 10th July 9.30am
Family Worship with Ark Time		Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> July 9.15am
Celebration of Holy Communi	on	Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> July 11.15am
A BCP Service of Holy CommunionThe Ark, AlvechurchWednesday 16th July 10am		
Open Church	Wednes	day 16th July 10.00am -12pm

### ST LAURENCE CHURCH DIARY JULY 2025

What's going at St Laurence Church, The Ark and Alvechurch Community

Places of Welcome	Wedne	sday 16th July 10.00am - 12pm		
Ark Tots and Toddlers		Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> July 9.30am		
Wedding Preparation and B	Bookings	at St Leonard's, Beoley Thursday 17th July 6-8pm		
Café Church	Breakfas	Sunday 20th July, 9.15am st Pastries served from 8.45am		
Morning Worship		Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> July 11.15am		
Open Church	Wedne	esday 23 <sup>rd</sup> July 10.00am -12pm		
Places of Welcome	Wednesd	day 23rd July 10.00am - 12pm		
Ark Tots and Toddlers EXTRA SESSION with little service in Church				
This session invites older sibling	ys to join.	Thursday 24th July 9.30am		
The Ark Afternoon Tea		Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> July 10.30am		
Family Worship with Ark Time		Sunday 27thJuly 9.15am		
Celebration of Holy Communion		Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> July 11.15am		
Open Church	Wednes	day 30th July 10.00am -12pm		
Places of Welcome	Wednesc	lay 30th July 10.00am - 12pm		
Ark Tots and Toddlers		Thursday 31st July 9.30am		

### COMMO PRAYE

#### <sup>©</sup>PRAYERS AND ANOINTING FOR HEALING AND WHOLENESS

Healing Encharist

St Leonard's Church, **Beoley** 3rd Sundays at 11.15am

> 20th July 21st September 18<sup>th</sup> January 19<sup>th</sup> April 21<sup>st</sup> June 16<sup>th</sup> August 18<sup>th</sup> October

St Laurence Church, Alvechurch 4th Sundays at 11.15am

> 24th August 26th October 28th December 22<sup>nd</sup> February 24<sup>th</sup> May 26<sup>th</sup> July 20<sup>th</sup> September



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BEOLEY 1ST THURSDAY OF MONTH

July 3rd August 7th September 4th October 2nd November 6th December 4th January No BCP February 5th March 5th April No BCP

ALVECHURCH **3RD WEDNESDAY OF MONTH** 

ST LAURENCE,

July 16th August 20th September 17th October 15th November 19th December 17th January 14th February No BCP March 18th April 15th

### CHURCHYARD NATURE TRAIL

Work is continuing on the nature trail, but in the meantime, I thought it might be interesting to know that we have elm trees among the many types of wonderful trees growing in the churchyard. Some of you will remember our many majestic elms in the countryside being stricken by Dutch Elm Disease in the 1970's and 80's and the elm disappearing completely from countless woods, copses etc.. Despite attempts being made to grow elms that are disease resistant, and I understand it is possible to buy one online, in most areas they have never reappeared. But they are there in the churchyard.

Before you get too excited, there is another but! There are 3 or 4 elms growing among other trees around the back of the Ark, just along from the steep path down to Bear Hill, but the ones growing are next to 2 or 3 other dead elms, the new ones being 'suckers' of the originals. The ones in the churchyard appear to grow to about 5m, but as they reach maturity and start fruiting and seeding, they then start to show signs of the disease and eventually die back completely. And sad to say some ash trees are showing signs of ash die back.

There you have it. An interesting addition to the beautiful flora and fauna present in the churchyard, but a short lived occupant.

Roger Wardle





This is a close up of the leaves.

# ST LEONARD'S CHURCH, BEOLEY SUMMER FÊTE

## **SATURDAY 5 JULY** 1.30-4.30 PM FREE ENTRY!

GAMES | CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES REFRESHMENTS | STALLS ENTERTAINMENT | PRIZE DRAW

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### SUNDAY FAMILY WORSHIP AND ARK TIME

Our 9.15am Family Services are for all ages, with activity bags available for little ones.

As well as singing and praying in church with their families, babies, children and Young People are invited through for Ark Time.



Led by DBS-cleared adults, in The Ark we listen to Bible stories and join in activities. Under 8's enjoy Bible stories, songs and craft activities with Jack the Labrador puppet. Over 8's dig deeper exploring similar Bible story themes, along with craft and drama activities. So do come along and join us.

6<sup>th</sup> July - 9.15am Family Communion Service with Ark Time

13<sup>th</sup> July 9.15am - Family worship with Ark Time

20<sup>th</sup> July - 9.15am Café style service all together in The Ark (breakfast pastries served from 8.45am)

27<sup>th</sup> July - 9.15am Family worship with Ark Time

# Ark Time – A Creative Space to Explore Faith

During our 9.15am worship on the 1st, 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month, everyone is welcome to take part in Ark Time—a chance to explore faith creatively, whatever your age. It's a relaxed, hands-on space in The Ark where we reflect on God's love in imaginative and thoughtful ways.

Whether you come on your own, with children, or with friends, you'll find Ark Time to be welcoming, inclusive, and inspiring.

On the 3rd Sunday of each month, we all gather in The Ark together for Café Church—another informal and interactive way to worship and grow in faith.

Come and see—we'd love to welcome you.

### OUR SHARED MINISTRY: WELCOMING, SERVING, PRAYING, SHARING

At St Laurence, our vision is that everyone is welcome, valued, and loved by God and each other as we explore faith and prayer together. That vision doesn't just happen on its own — it comes alive through the ministry we share, with each person bringing their gifts and time to build up our community.

We are looking for people to be part of this ministry, helping to make St Laurence a place of welcome, prayer, and belonging. Here are some of the roles where you can get involved:

#### Welcomers

Arrive about 20–30 minutes before worship to greet people, offer service sheets, and help newcomers feel at home. Being a Welcomer is about sharing God's love through a smile and a warm word, letting everyone know they belong.

#### Hospitality

Preparing and serving tea and coffee after the 9.15am worship helps build community and creates space for friendships to grow. On Café Worship Sundays, refreshments are served at the beginning instead. Arriving early to set up in the Ark means our welcome is ready before the service begins. Hospitality shows God's generosity and warmth — it's a simple but powerful act of welcome.

#### Leading Prayers in Worship

Preparing and leading prayers helps the whole church lift its voice to God. Training and support are available if you'd like to learn. Leading prayers helps us connect our everyday lives and concerns with God's love and hope, reminding us that God is with us in every part of life.

#### Reader

Reading the Bible passages in worship is about sharing God's story with the congregation. It's more than reading words on a page — it's about letting God's message come alive and inviting everyone to hear God's voice in new ways. Readers help us listen, reflect, and grow together in faith.

Each of these roles is part of the living ministry of St Laurence — a ministry that belongs to us all. If you'd like to know more or want to get involved, please speak to one of the clergy team or contact the church office.

Together, we can bring our vision to life, so that everyone knows they are welcome, valued, and loved by God and by one another.

If you would like to be part of the churches ministry in any of these ways please do contact Penny in the office or speak to Revd Gail.



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### THINKING ABOUT BAPTISM OR CONFIRMATION

Baptism and Confirmation are important steps in the Christian journey—signs of belonging, commitment, and God's grace. Baptism welcomes us into the Church; Confirmation is a chance to affirm that faith for ourselves and be strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

If you're aged 10 or over and would like to explore Baptism, Confirmation, or both, we'd love to talk with you. We offer a short preparation course to help you reflect, ask questions, and grow in faith alongside others.

Speak to Revd Gail or Revd Martin if you'd like to find out more—there's a place for you on this journey.

### Thinking about Baptism for your child?

Baptism is a joyful way to begin your child's journey of faith—a celebration of love, belonging, and God's promises. Whether you're new to church or a familiar face, we're always happy to talk about baptism.

We offer relaxed preparation to help you feel at ease and ready for this special occasion.

To find out more or book a baptism, contact Penny in the church office—we'd love to hear from you.

### Wondering about a Christening or Thanksgiving service for your child??



We'd love to meet with you and talk about it. Our preparation sessions are in the Ark on the following Sundays between 3 and 4pm:

> June 6<sup>th</sup> July 13<sup>th</sup> August 10<sup>th</sup> September 14<sup>th</sup> October 12<sup>th</sup>

Do book onto one by emailing church-beoleyandalvechurch@outlook.com

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### A GIFT THAT LASTS: BIBLES FOR SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

Supported by the Churches in Alvechurch and Rowney Green

For many years, children in our local schools have received a very special gift: their own Bible – a tradition made possible by the long-running Bibles for Schools initiative, generously supported by all four churches in Alvechurch and Rowney Green, including St Laurence Church.

The initiative began some years ago under the faithful leadership of Sue Phillip Wardle. Around eight years ago, Rachel Towers took over its coordination and continues to lead the scheme today with care and dedication. She was drawn to the role out of a deep appreciation for how valuable it is to place a Bible into the hands of each child – a gift that may stay with them for life.

Each year, Year 5 pupils at Alvechurch Middle School (AMS) are gifted a Good News Rainbow Bible, provided at a greatly reduced cost by the charity Bibles for Children (biblesforchildren.org.uk). The school is always grateful to receive them and welcomes the continued partnership.

Year 1 pupils at Crown Meadow First School are also given the Usborne Children's Miniature Bible and are also gratefully received.

The process begins each May, when Rachel contacts the Bible suppliers to confirm availability and pricing. She then reaches out to both schools to check whether they would like to receive Bibles again and how many are needed. At the same time, church representatives from St Laurence, St Leonard, Rowney Green Chapel, and Alvechurch Baptist Church are contacted and invited to promote the scheme within their congregations.

For four to five weeks, donations are collected – often boosted by Gift Aid and a small carry-over from the previous year. Once fundraising is complete, the Bibles are ordered, and bookplates are prepared, identifying the gift as coming from the churches in Alvechurch and Rowney Green. School staff write each child's name on the plates and insert them into the Bibles, which are then delivered in time for the start of the autumn term.

The presentation of the Bibles to pupils is a quiet but significant moment in the school year – a sign of love, generosity, and shared values. It's a simple act, but one that reflects the care our churches have for the young people in our community.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to Rachel Towers for her faithful coordination, to all the church representatives and donors, and to everyone who supports this initiative year after year. It is truly a shared expression of faith in action.

If you would like to contribute to the cost of the bibles this year (approximately £5.95 - Bible) you can do so following the details below or by putting cash in an envelope marked 'Bibles for Schools' and placing it in the offering plates or give it directly to Rachel Towers.

Money can be sent by Bank transfer to the following account.

Barclay's Account is:-

Alvechurch Parochial Church Council

Sort code - 20-71-45

Account Number-80119792

Ref -'Bibles' so that Michelle Read the treasurer for St Laurence who will be dealing with the finance once donations are received, will know what it is for.

Many thanks for your support.

### Prayer Ministry

At St Laurence, we recognise that everyone carries joys and burdens that are sometimes hard to share in the busyness of life. Each Sunday, during and after our worship, someone from our prayer team is available in the Lady Chapel. Whether you're looking for a listening ear, a quiet moment of prayer, or simply some company, you are warmly welcome to come and sit. There's no pressure to speak – just an open space where you can be heard and held in prayer, whatever is on your heart.



### THERE'S NOTHING ORDINARY ABOUT ORDINARY TIME!

If you've ever looked at a church calendar, you might have noticed that after the colourful seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter, we move into something called Ordinary Time. But don't let the name fool you — there's nothing dull about it!

Ordinary Time actually comes from the Latin word "ordinalis," meaning "numbered." It's the season where Sundays are counted in order (First Sunday after Trinity, Second Sunday after Pentecost, and so on). It's the Church's way of marking time — but it's also a season bursting with meaning.

The Church's year is shaped like a rhythm, retelling the story of Jesus' life and ministry:

- Advent and Christmas We celebrate the coming of Christ.
- Lent and Easter We journey with Jesus to the cross and resurrection.
- Pentecost We rejoice in the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Ordinary Time We live out what it means to follow Jesus in our everyday lives.

Ordinary Time isn't "ordinary" because it's boring; it's "ordinary" because it's when we learn to walk in faith day by day, not just in the big festivals. It's a season for growing — putting down roots, bearing fruit, and exploring what it means to be a disciple of Jesus in our work, our families, and our community.

In the green of the church's vestments and altar cloths, we see the colour of growth — the invitation to deepen our faith, to be nurtured by God's love, and to share that love with others.

At St Laurence, our vision is that everyone is welcome, valued, and loved by God and each other as we explore faith and prayer together. Ordinary Time is the perfect season for that! It's a time when we discover how God's love meets us in the everyday — in our conversations, our shared meals, our prayers, and our service to others. It's a time when we can grow in faith together, helping one another to see that God is with us in all seasons of life — and that's what it means to be truly welcome and loved, not just at church, but wherever we are.

So why not come and see? Whether you've been coming for years or are just curious, Ordinary Time is a wonderful season to explore church life, join a service, or simply take time to reflect. It's a reminder that God is present in the everyday, in the "ordinary" moments that shape our lives.

At St Laurence, we'd love to welcome you — and there's nothing ordinary about that!

### Praying for Alvechurch

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28

For our schools and children: may this final term be filled with joy, growth, and moments of celebration.

For teachers and staff: grant them patience, energy, and encouragement as they finish the academic year.

For those whose routines pause over summer: may this be a season of rest, renewal, and gentle reconnection.

For all who find summer lonely or difficult: may our communities offer warmth, kindness, and belonging.

For churches and groups taking a break: may the Spirit continue to work in the spaces of stillness.

For the beauty of creation in summer: may we give thanks, tread lightly, and live with gratitude.

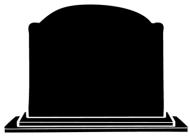
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### Hillside WI

Caroline, the owner of Hats by CC in Droitwich was our speaker at the June meeting. She creates hats for special occasions and her hats can also be hired. Although she is busy at this time of year making hats for weddings, investitures and Lady's Day at the races. Caroline managed to spare time to speak to us before going back to her workshop.

Caroline began by talking about the history of hats before she explained the long process of making a hat, demonstrating with the wooden blocks and materials she uses The fun part of the evening involved trying on hats, being shown styles to suit face shape and our height s and how to position a hat on a head correctly. She really deserved tea and homemade cake after all of that.

Following the speaker the business section of the meeting including introducing the committee for the year ahead and the different tasks they have been allocated. Plans were finalised for the trip to Hillier's in June and ideas were shared for a proposed visit and meal in August.

Our next meeting is on 2nd July and as it is our birthday meeting scones and jam will replace the usual cakes. We are only 68 years old. Our speaker Averill Pulley worked at The Royal Worcester factory and will be demonstrating how to make porcelain flowers

Visitors are always welcome we meet at 7.30 at The Ark on the first Wednesday of the month. If you have a query please contact Marian Clemons on 07586354825

### ALVECHURCH VILLAGE SOCIETY

#### ALVECHURCH VILLAGE SOCIETY - UPCOMING EVENTS

#### **EVENTS**

Events for the 2024/25 season have been completed and will re-start in September. See www.alvechurchvs.org for details in due course

#### WALKS

Sunday July 6th 2pm Rowney Green and Beyond Meet at Rowney Green Village Hall B48 7QP Friday August 1st 6.30pm End of Season Mystery Walk Meet at Alvechurch Station steps B48 7SD

For further information and membership see the AVS website: www.alvechurchvs.org

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### **Our Team**



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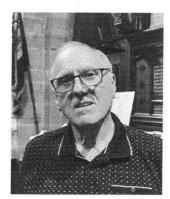


**Revd Martin Allen** Assistant Curate 117 Birmingham Road 07788 872738

**Michael Davenport** 0121 447 7955



**Penny Walker** Ministry Support Administrator Tuesday - Thursday 9.30am -1.30pm 0121 447 7955 church-beoleyandalvechurch@outlook.com



**Mick Fletcher** Authorised Lay Minister 0121 447 7955



**Charlotte Palethorpe** Ark and Facilities Administrator 0121 447 7955 admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk

#### Churchwardens





Sue Phillips Wardle Licensed Lay Minister 55 Birmingham Road 0121 445 0505

**Deputy Churchwardens** 

Mark Linton

**Helen Ayling** Licensed Lay Minister "Tamcroft", Hewell Lane 0121 445 6176 07708433691 **Authorised Lay Ministers** 





Helena Allen

Andy Notley

**Graham Clark** 



Sarah Linton



**Sue Sperring** 

Susan Lambert Safeguarding Officer 07769110608



**Colin Bennett Tower Master** 01527 64077



Michelle Read **Finance Officer** stlaurencetreasurer@outlook.com

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#### The Ark

### AFTERNOON TEA

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2.30pm

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