

The **Grapevine**

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ST LAURENCE CHURCH ALVECHURCH



APRIL 2021

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

St Laurence Church Alvechurch

Our in person services in church are resuming on Palm Sunday, 28 March, albeit on a limited basis subject to current safety restrictions. Please see page 12 for more details. 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 and 13 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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Front cover photograph by Anthony Hill ©



Martin Allen writes...

Happy Easter to you!

I do hope that you are enjoying sun, the spring and all that Easter can bring.

I am writing this in the middle of the seasons of Lent and third lockdown and know that you are reading it at Easter or on the far side of it. I can look forward from when I am writing to lockdown being stepped down a little and more changes around Easter.

Let us look back though to Easter 2020. At that point we were shell shocked by the virus, the new measures and only a couple of weeks into lockdown. We thought it would be over relatively quickly. Being on the other side of the first lockdown we can see how wrong we may have been. Hindsight is an especially useful tool! Looking forward from this Lent and Easter there is a sense that some of the bad things are beginning to be behind us and that life will improve. Just as we could not foresee what life would be like last year after Easter, we cannot this year but hope it will be better. We hope for transformation although we cannot see ahead far or clearly. It may be a small mercy not being able to see much that lies ahead...

Life for the disciples was like that. Jesus predicted that things were going to change, dark days were ahead, he would suffer, be

raised to new life from the dead, and leave them. Looking forwards they could not really understand. They only really understood his words, when he had gone, with the benefit of hindsight.

It must have been scary for them - as they thought ahead or when Jesus was gone realising some of what lay ahead. As frightening for them as life for us with Covid-19 raging around us. What kept them going? How did they survive? Well, they had two things in their favour. One was having met and known Jesus and being able to take his words to heart. The other was the arrival of the Holy Spirit who came as a dynamic befriender galvanising them and leading to the rapid growth of the embryonic Christian church.

Maybe for us around Easter 2021 we feel fearful about the gradual easing of lockdown, a bit like the disciples. There are two things which may help us. We can be cautiously confident that we have the vaccine to help us. Secondly, we may in this time of lockdowns, have realised what is really important to us in life and perhaps heard something about faith and Jesus. Perhaps for the first time, we understand the Easter story of believing in God and life being transformed. Perhaps we can start getting to know Jesus as our companion through difficulties.

My hope and prayer is that next year at this time you can look back and it marks the start of a new life less dominated by Covid and the start or next stage of your journey of faith.

Happy Easter

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Thoughts in a Covid world

Philippa Brakes writes...

I imagine all around the country, exhausted parents returned from dropping children at school on 8th March and collapsed, dazed into the nearest chair, too drained even to make a cup of coffee, but drinking in the silence! I am in awe of what parents have achieved over the last months and you deserve every moment of peace you can get.

With glimpses of possible freedoms ahead, along with the first tentative signs of spring, it really does feel as if a long "winter of discontent" is practically over. I wonder how long it will be before we learn to live with the inconvenience of Covid, just like we have always lived with flu? If the experts are to be believed, the disease, after vaccination, shouldn't be any worse.

Will we soon live without fear? Sometimes fear is more limiting than imposed restrictions and it would be a shame if our lives become curbed and bound by a dread of the close community life humanity has always enjoyed.

We are designed by God to be sociable, to reach out, to hold each other in love, comfort, support and friendship. I love the way Jesus used touch to bless and heal people. He touched lepers (unthinkable in bible times). How blessed must they have felt to experience human contact, maybe for the first time in years? Jesus accepted the touch of the woman who washed his feet, ignoring the social rules and expectations of his time, not to mention the extreme disapproval of his hosts. Neither he, nor later when empowered by the Holy Spirit, his disciples ever feared or rejected human contact from anyone, however disgraced or marginalised by society they might be.

Here's praying this summer will see all of us able to get together in love and friendship and do all the things we formerly took for granted, but will now so appreciate. My personal ambition is to line up all eight of our grandchildren on our sofa for a family photo. Some of them haven't even met yet! Whatever your ambitions, when they are possible, may God go before you and bless your reunions with joy.

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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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New Diocesan Stewardship & Resources Officer

Chris Boden has been appointed as our new Stewardship and Resources Officer, taking over from Alison Maddocks

Chris starts in the role on Monday 15 February and will work with parishes across the Diocese to support them in their financial stewardship and help them to offer a clear and compelling vision for generous Christian giving.

For the past 10 years, Chris has been a brother in the Society of St Francis, an Anglican Order based at houses around the country, including at Glasshampton in our diocese. Most recently he has worked as Provincial Bursar for the Society and was responsible for all financial, legal and building maintenance aspects of the charity, including how to best use their finances for mission and ministry. This has been more challenging during the pandemic with the Society's houses unable to host retreats. Chris said: *"This is an exciting role to be taking on at this time. The Diocese is going through a time of change and finances need to be a part of that; but it's important that issues around money are seen in the context of our mission and ministry. My role will be about talking with parishes to understand the challenges they're facing, which have been made more acute due to the pandemic, and helping to find new and creative ways of dealing with these."*

Diocesan Secretary, John Preston, said: *"I'm delighted we have appointed Chris to this role from a very strong field of candidates. Ensuring our parishes are able to nurture generous giving is key to obtaining the financial stability that is essential to their health and sustainability. Chris' spirituality and background in the Society of St Francis equips him really well to bring a different focus and approach to stewardship."*

Chris concluded: *"I see this role as very people-focussed and I'm looking forward to getting to know people around the Diocese. As soon as we're allowed, I will get getting out to meet PCCs to find out how I can help."*

The Midland Sinfonia

Although we have been unable to hold concerts in the last year we are looking forward to restarting when conditions permit. Do keep an eye on our website www.midlandsinfonia.co.uk and here in The Grapevine. We so look forward to being back performing at St Laurence's when we can.

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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Thank you from Gilbert Eastham

Thank you to all who remembered my 91st birthday on 17th February, and for the lovely card from "the church".

I was sorry not to be able to share the celebration with you in The Ark this year; I pray that next year we will return to a communal form of greeting and worship. May God be with us all.

Thank you from Janet Hosking

Janet Hosking would like to thank all her friends at St Laurence Church for their lovely card and kind wishes.

Hoping you are all keeping well and I look forward to seeing you all again in church quite soon. Thank you.

The Diocesan Spirituality Network

Spirituality is all we Christians really have to offer the world, because the Gospel is nothing other than growing in union with Christ. We are learning how to grow our spirits, grow our souls, in Christ – and helping others to discover with us that this is the fullness of life we seek.

The Diocesan Spirituality Network is a collection of all sorts of folk from across Worcestershire and Dudley who want to grow their souls and encourage everyone to join in. The group meet virtually or face to face two or three times a year, spending a morning together.

Their next session will be on Thursday 6 May, from 10am. Canon Peter Kerr, well known to many in the diocese, will lead the morning session, reflecting on how our spirits, our souls, have fared over the past year - *Signposts & Sanctuaries: Our Pilgrimage through the Pandemic*.

To book your place, contact Revd Nick Wright:
revnmwright@btinternet.com



Easter Word Search

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EASTER	SOLDIERS
GOLGOTHA	SON OF GOD
HIGH PRIEST	SPEAR
JESUS CHRIST	STONE
JOSEPH	TEMPLE
JUDAS ISCARIOT	THIEVES
KING	THREE DAYS
LAMB	TOMB

Finding hope in difficult times

Bishop Martin writes...



I don't know about you but for me, Lockdown Three has been particularly hard. The days have been short, the weather cold and the news very depressing as the virus spread so rapidly once again. Passing that awful milestone of 100,000 Covid deaths was a sobering moment and the pressure on health and care staff, on clergy and families has been immense. As a country we have endured more deaths per head of population than any other nation so far. Every community in the Diocese has been affected, with the loss from Covid particularly acute in some communities, notably where poverty and overcrowding is worse. As we look to build back better over the coming twelve months, as a nation we must address issues of inequality and injustice that have been highlighted so starkly during this time. Two of our diocesan priorities as Kingdom People are to transform communities and to share hope - we will all need to play our part in building a fairer and better world.

There is some hopeful news. The vaccine roll out is wonderful, and every day I hear from people delighted to have had '*the jab*'. Days are lengthening, the sun is growing stronger and there are the first glimmers of hope that the cycle of crushing lockdowns will come to an end.

I'm reminded of verses from the well-known Psalm 121.

*I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?
My help comes from the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.
He will not suffer your foot to stumble;
he who watches over you will not sleep.*

Many people have found solace and comfort in the natural world. 'Lifting up eyes to the hills' perhaps, but perhaps just treasuring a tree outside a window, or the changing sky from day to day. My daughter has been locked down in central London. She has discovered a love of birds, putting out crumbs each day outside her London basement flat and watching blue tits and robins come to pick them up. Nature reminds us that whatever our current problems, we are part of something bigger. Part of God's world, God's creation. Ultimately our help and our hope come from the Lord, '*the maker of heaven and earth.*' And '*he who watches over you will not sleep.*'

May that same Lord of heaven and earth hold you and keep you this day and always.
Amen.

Burning down the house research

In 2020 “We Are Tearfund” and “Youthscape” surveyed 630 young Christians from the UK. They asked 14-19 year olds about their thoughts on the climate, the church and their faith.

Their report ‘*Burning the House Down*’ was published in early March 2021. This was the largest ever survey of young British Christians’ thoughts and feelings about climate change and their faith.

It found that Christian teenagers see justice as an important part of their faith and that climate change disproportionately affects poor people, people of colour, women and minority groups.

Young people saw their activism as a response to the call to love others as God has loved us. As well as motivating their climate activism, young people also said that their faith sustains it, giving them hope and a long-term vision. In turn, their activism was shaping their faith.



Young people had three basic messages for their churches:

1. We need change
2. Climate activism is fundamental to our faith
3. The Church should be leading the way

What can churches do?

Young people want the adults in their churches to support them to respond practically to climate change. This practical action is more important to them than teaching about climate change, prayer, or emotional support for climate anxiety – though many welcome these forms of support too.

More information visit Tear Fund - <https://weare.tearfund.org/burning-down-the-house>

Download research - <https://weare.tearfund.org/downloadresearch>

Read the report - <https://weare.tearfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Burning-Down-The-House-Youthscape-and-Tearfund.pdf>

Visit Young Christian Climate Network - <https://www.yccn.uk>

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 are resuming on **Palm Sunday, 28 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/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 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.



Online recorded Easter services

(the YouTube link will be available on the homepage of our church website – www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org - from 9:30 AM on the day of each service):

1 April:

Maundy Thursday communion service, led by Revd Richard Bubbers

2 April:

Good Friday reflective service on the Way of the Cross, with contributions from Churches Together in Alvechurch and Rowney Green

4 April:

Easter Sunday celebration service, led by Revd Richard Bubbers

In person Easter services in church

(subject to current covid-19 restrictions as previously)

1 April:

Maundy Thursday communion service at 7:30 PM, led by Rev Richard Bubbers

2 April:

Good Friday - St Laurence's church will be open for private prayer from 12 noon to 2 PM, and a recording of the CTARG reflective Good Friday service (approximately 30 minutes) will be shown at 12 noon and at 1 PM

4 April:

Easter Sunday - 9:30 AM Easter family communion service, led by Revd Richard Bubbers

11:15 AM Easter morning prayer (Common Worship), led by Revd Richard Bubbers



Parish Prayers

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

4 April – St Laurence Close

11 April – Station Road

18 April – Stonehouse Lane

25 April – Storage Lane



A prayer for our society

Almighty God, as we give thanks for progress in combating the COVID virus, so keep us mindful of those facing a continuing crisis in their work and income.

By your love and compassion encourage us to reach out to those in need; supporting all faced with redundancy and living with uncertainty in their working life.

Inspire us, by the choices we make, to shape a more equitable global economy, where all enjoy the fruits of their labour, the most vulnerable are cared for, and your provision is shared so that none go in need.

This we ask in the name of you Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen

From The Registers



Funerals and Cremations

May they rest in the peace of Christ

Margaret Parry	18 February
Archie Harrison	19 February
Maureen Fern	24 February
Hazel Knattress	2 March
Mary Jukes	9 March

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 Alison Smith, 12 Hollington Road, 447 7293 Mrs Janet Wright, 28 Callow Hill Road, Alvechurch, B48 7LP Mr Andy Notley, 445 5653 Mr Roger Wardle, 55 Birmingham Road, 445 0505 Mr Michael Davenport
PCC Secretary	Mrs Lysandra Notley, lysnotley@icloud.com, 07989327043
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Mrs Sue Lambert, 7 Cygnet Close, B48 7PX, 07769110608
PCC Treasurer	Mrs Janet Wright, 28 Callow Hill Road, Alvechurch, B48 7LP
Organist & Choirmaster	Mr David Richmond, The Ferns, Chapel Lane, 445 3569
Electoral Roll Officer	Mrs Janet Wright, 28 Callow Hill Road, 445 4335
Tower Captain	Mr Colin Bennett, 122 Redditch Road, 01527 64077
Singing Group	Mrs Lynda Wolstencroft, 49 Hinton Avenue, 445 3212
Ark Tots & Toddlers	Mrs Sarah Linton, sarah100work@gmail.com
Flower Co-ordinator	Mrs Ann Thurrell, Top Barn, Scarfield Hill, 447 7668
Ark Bookings Secretary & Grapevine Editor	Mr Ian Price, The Ark, School Lane, 447 7955 admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk

PCC Special Responsibilities

Finance and Standing Committee

Richard Bubbers	Mick Fletcher
Graham Clark	Janet Wright
Bob Dale	Peter Freeman

Buildings, Fabric and Churchyard for Mission Committee

Bob Dale	Colin Bennett
Graham Clark	Peter Freeman
Mick Fletcher	Andy Humphries
Janet Wright	

Children and Youth Committee

Martin Allen	Mick Fletcher
Thomas Birchall	Lynne Clark
Kate Birchall	Sarah Linton

Missionary Committee

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

Calendar for APRIL



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

Wednesday 14 **MAY 2021 GRAPEVINE GOES TO PRESS:**
articles to - 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

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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
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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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