

The Grapevine

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ST LAURENCE CHURCH ALVECHURCH



JANUARY 2016

Online at www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org

St Laurence Church Alvechurch

SUNDAY SERVICES

8.00am Holy Communion

Book of Common Prayer Communion Service, will take place on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. On the other Sundays there will be an 8.00am Book of Common Prayer Communion Service at St Leonard's in Beoley

9.30am Family Service

*with Holy Communion on the 1st Sunday
and Baptisms on the 4th Sunday*

11.15am Parish Eucharist

6.00pm Evensong

On the 4th Sunday of the month at 6pm there will be Sacred Space, a quieter more reflective space for worship

At Rowney Green Shared Church

9.30am Methodist/Anglican Service

with Holy Communion on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month

DAILY SERVICE

9.00am Monday to Friday In St Laurence Church

ORGANISATIONS

Sunday Club	Sundays at 9.30am in the Church and Ark (445 1854)
Choir	Thursdays at 7.45pm in Church (445 3569)
Bellringers	Sundays at 10.30am and 5.30pm Tuesday Practice at 7.30pm (01527 64077)
Women's Fellowship	4th Wednesday of the month at 2.00pm in Tanyard Lane Community Centre (445 2125)
Mum's the Word	Thursdays at 9.30am in The Ark (07773509390) Tiny Tots Service 10.15am 1st Thursday of the month
Ark Café	Thursdays during term time at 12.15pm (447 7017)
Home Group	Thursdays, 7.30pm at the Coach House (445 2547)

THE ARK

Enquiries to Ian Price 0121 447 7955



Whatever you are facing in 2016, there is good reason not to be afraid

It was in 1939 that King George VI established the tradition of the Royal Christmas Broadcast: sitting in front of two microphones on a table at Sandringham, he spoke live to offer a message of reassurance amid uncertain political times:

"A New Year is at hand. We cannot tell what it will bring. If it brings peace, how thankful we shall all be. If it brings us continued struggle we shall remain undaunted."

He went on to quote from Minnie Haskins' poem, *"The Gate of the Year"* (1908):

"I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year,

"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied, *"Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be better than light, and safer than a known way."*

As we contemplate the New Year and what it may hold, whether we are staying physically in the same place or moving on, the New Year challenges our attitudes to the new and the unknown.

The message of the Christian Gospel is one of hope and good news: we do not need to be afraid.

In the Old Testament, as the people of Israel were about to enter the Promised Land, God said to them: *"do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go"* (Joshua 1.9).

In the New Testament Jesus himself promised to be with his disciples, as they went out into the world. As he commissioned them to go

Richard Bubbers writes.....

and make disciples of all nations before he ascended back to the Father, he said, *"surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"* (Matthew 28.20). God knows us intimately, and is always with us and will never forsake us. Through everything, he loves us unfailingly and unconditionally (e.g. Isaiah 49.15).

We can also be assured that when God calls us, it is for us to follow and be faithful, but God is the one who will equip us. 1 Thessalonians 5.24 has it: *"the one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it."*

For many the world of work holds particular challenges. To help us face some of the challenges particularly in the workplace, on some Sunday mornings in January and February and April (before Lent and after Easter) at St Laurence we will be looking at issues such as ambition, life choices, work-life balance, tough decisions, stress, and failure/disappointment/hope. We will be drawing on the book by Ken Costa, *"God at work."*

As Ken Costa says, God is not just interested in what we do on a Sunday: he is the Creator God, and work was his idea in the first place, and it therefore matters to him what we do in the whole of our lives, not least in our working week. You are very welcome to join us as we explore these issues, either at our 9.30 family service or at our 11.15 Eucharist service.

When we consider change and challenge, if we remember God's nature and character, this will help us to be as Jesus wants us be, trusting in him and not fearing what is to come. May this increasingly be our experience, as we journey through this New Year.

With all good wishes for 2016.

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St Laurence Women's Fellowship



Jill Woolley writes...

After the festivities at Christmas and the New Year we look forward to February 24th when Janis Waldron will talk about the History of Pearls and how to recognise different types.

On March 23rd Dawn Nex gives an Amis talk and on April 27th we finish our Golden Year with our Annual General Meeting.

May we wish everyone Happiness, Good Health and Success in 2016. If you would like to come along to any of our meetings we will be in the Tanyard Centre at 2pm. You will be most welcome.

A "Thank You" from Veronica Rogers



Thank you all for making the
22nd November such a
memorable day of celebration.

I have opened the heart - warming cards, and donations to the Montgomery Children's Home in Zimbabwe - the amount raised is amazingly £392. Thank you so much for your generosity.

My 80th (celebrations) stretched over a period of 3 weeks which included celebrations during and after the Christmas meal at the Ark - thank you for all your gifts and kindness.

I am so blessed to live in such a caring and loving fellowship which has helped to create such wonderful memories.

I pray that the peace and love of Christ will bless you and your families throughout 2016.

Alvechurch Village Society

Ray Yarnell writes...

The January event will be our usual New Years Quiz held in the Alvechurch Village hall on Friday 22nd January. This is a great night with BYO drinks and nibbles.

Proceeds in aid of the Village hall. Teams of up to 6 @ £2.50 per person, ring Ray on 07931 328023 to book a table.

Join us for 'A WALK AROUND BIRMINGHAM'S CANALS' on 10th January 2016. Led by Adrian Smith (07941 508881). We meet at Alvechurch Railway Station car park at 2.15pm for departure at 2.30pm and returning at 17.45pm. NB Ticket cost (£4.40p return).

Education Sunday

Sam Setchell Diocesan Communications Officer writes...



Education Sunday takes place on 24 January 2016. Some of our Church Primary Schools have been learning about tax justice:

Death and taxes are said to be the only certainties in life. However even the young in Primary Schools can understand what happens to a society unable to use money from taxes to provide the utilities we enjoy in the UK.

It is these inequalities that the "Tax Justice Initiative" wants to address and thanks to the help of Paul Harrison, Vicar of Churchill, Blakedown and Broome, and Christian Aid, some schools in the Stourbridge deanery were offered the opportunity to learn about the problems which result from the inability to collect Tax.

The students were then able to take their petitions in support of Tax Justice and lobby their MP either in London or at school. A total of six schools from the West Midlands took part in the project. Four different MPs were approached which meant that they made a large significant impact in support of Tax Justice.

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Christmas & New Year Wishes



Happy Christmas
&
Happy New Year



Rosina, John and Caroline Spreckley

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Sam Setchell Diocesan Communications Officer writes...

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from the 18 to 25 January.

Different countries provide the theme for each year - the theme for 2016 is provided by the Churches of Latvia. Today Latvia is a crossroads where Roman Catholic, Protestant Churches and Orthodox Churches meet. Because of this unique location, Christians from many backgrounds are side by side, but not one of them is dominant.

Gathered from the variety of churches are members who have produced resources for churches across the world on the theme "*Salt of the earth*". They draw attention to the words of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel which tells us that as his disciples we are to be light to the world, and salt of the earth: the very things that as human beings we cannot live without, and therefore without the Gospel, without the promise of the good news of God's love in Christ, the world is lost.

This year's resources provide an opportunity to reflect upon our Christian vocation to be salt and light, to be one in Christ, and to work together in service to our local community and to the world.

Lord Jesus, you commanded us to break bread together and to drink one cup in remembrance of you - your imperative ignored. Open the hearts and minds of Christians world-wide, especially those entrusted with leadership in your Church, to the joys and blessings of this fellowship. Create in all of us a passion to realise the hope to which you have called us: one body and one Spirit, one Lord, one baptism, one God who is above and through and in all. Amen.

The Ark Café

A Happy New Year to all our customers!



The Cafe reopens for business on Thursday, 14th January after the Christmas break and our menu for January and up to the February half-term is as follows:

- January 14th Roast Lamb
- January 21st Mary Berry's Chicken Recipe
- January 28th Roast Pork
- February 4th Gammon and Parsley Sauce
- February 11th Somerset Chicken

We look forward to your custom as always in 2016 and please remember that the Ark Cafe is open to everybody.

We look forward to seeing you all there on 14th January.

Alvechurch Historical Society

Hilary Taylor writes...

For our last meeting of the old year we welcomed musician & historian Richard Churchley who entertained us "From Boar's Head to Byng". It was a lively evening of Christmas songs, from Worcestershire and beyond, many were ancient, some modern.

There is no meeting in January, so our first meeting of the new year will be held on **Monday 1st February 2016**. This is our AGM, which will be followed by a slide & audio presentation on the Worcester & Birmingham canal which runs through Alvechurch.

AHS meetings are held on the first Monday of the month, at 7.45pm, in the museum on School Lane. Parking is available behind the Catholic Church, with their kind permission. New faces are always welcome, just come along, or contact our chairman, Anne Humphries on 0121 445 5955.

2016 Grapevine Deadline Dates

Please note - For 2016 we have a new deadline date for Grapevine article submissions which is the **14th of the month** (except December which is the **7th**).

Articles should be sent electronically to - thearkalvechurch@yahoo.co.uk



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Tiny Tots Service



There will be no Tiny Tots Service in St Laurence church in January.

The next one will be on Thursday 4th February at 10am and run on the first Thursday of the month thereafter.

A Wonderful Day

Sue Brotherton writes...

What a lovely day we had for the 30th Anniversary of the Family Service. The Service itself, led by the Reverend Richard Bubbers to a packed Church was very appropriate and very enjoyable. Veronica Rogers gave us a run down of how the Family Service was conceived and started.

Many friends who have moved away from Alvechurch, came back for the day, it was great to see them as they were very active in St Laurence's and are well loved.

Moving on to the lunch, what can I say except Wonderful Wonderful Wonderful. The Roast was delicious with all the accompanying array of lovely vegetables and the wide choice of sweets were out of this world.

A happy day spent sitting down with new and old friends, a big Church Family. This isn't the end of the tale as there were more Celebrations to follow but not told by me!

One more thing, there is a big thank you to be said to Veronica and her Team for organising the day.

Be Who You Truly Are This New Year

The Bishop of Dudley writes...

A New Year brings with it a reflecting back over the last 12 months. We have the various personalities of the year, the top 100 of this and that, we are reminded of the major news events and iconic images that perhaps we have all too quickly forgotten. It is also a time to look forward, praying for a more peaceful, generous, caring, loving 2016 between people and with creation on this our common home.

Recently I read an incredible little novel by the German author Robert Seethaler. "A Whole Life" is a delightful warm and gentle book that describes one man's life living in the Austrian Alps. One reviewer has written that it is '*an exquisite novel about a simple life, it has already demonstrated its power to move thousands of readers with a message of solace and truth*'. It is the story of Andreas, a man of few words, who is left broken hearted following the death of his wife. He leaves his valley just twice in his whole life. Once to fight in World War II - where he is taken prisoner in the Caucasus - and then, six months before his death, on a disorientating day trip by bus. Yet he knows the landscape of his home in immense detail; scaling its mountains, crosses its pastures, and sitting pondering at the doorway of his simple home.

A Whole Life is a tender but not sentimental book, about finding dignity and beauty in solitude. In the closing pages the author writes of Andreas, '*He couldn't remember where he had come from, and ultimately he didn't know where he would go. But he could look back without regret on the time in between, his life, with a full-throated laugh and utter amazement*'.

Above all, in crossing backwards and forwards through one man's life, the novel weaves together the experiences and moments, often seemingly insignificant as they happened, that shape Andreas into the person that he is. In this month of New Year resolutions, I wonder who God would truly have you be? God loves us as we are because we are as God made us. He who knit 'me together in my mother's womb...for I am fearfully and wonderfully made' (Psalm 139.13-14), calls us to be somewhere between living life looking backwards, and living to far looking into the future. God's gift to us today is often lost, ignored or simply not seen. It lies in the sacrament of the present moment. There we find who we truly are. God calls us in every situation to be ourselves: nothing more and nothing less.

It is from ourselves that we can be sources of new life for others. It's a life-time's task but we are supported in this by other members of Christ's community, inspired daily by the Holy Spirit, the love of God the Father, and the companionship of Jesus who is the truest self of all.

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Parish Prayers

Prayers will be said at St Laurence Church for the residents of the following roads:



Sunday 3rd January – Gravel Pit Lane
Sunday 10th January – Heron Close
Sunday 17th January - Hinton Avenue
Sunday 24th January – Hollington Road
Sunday 31st January – Icknield Street

Another Ripe Old Age

In response to Gloria's invitation for any elderly residents to share their stories, Robert Jones writes:-

I was born on the 3rd January 1918, which makes me 97. I was born in Manchester and educated at Christ Church Upper School in Salford. I had several jobs on aerodromes until my call-up papers came and I joined the Royal Engineers and saw action at Dunkirk in 1940. I married in 1941 but my wife and I had only a short time together before I was sent to Egypt. Whilst visiting Jerusalem an amazing thing happened - I met my brother walking along the road! When the desert campaign was over my unit was sent to Italy. I was eventually demobbed in May 1946.

I have always worked in engineering, my last job being with Cincinnati where I stayed until retiring in 1980.

My wife and I had some wonderful holidays in Italy until she sadly passed away in 1988. I have a daughter and a son but live on my own without any help. I still drive and, as well as shopping in Redditch, I visit the Ark cafe each Thursday and am a regular church attender at St Laurence.

Thank You

Meryl Hill writes...

We would like to thank Ian and the Grapevine magazine for their help and willingness in including our events in the Grapevine during the last year. It is much appreciated. Alvechurch Baptist Church.



Snowball Word Search



snowball
snowman
ice
winter
sledging

white
scarf
gloves
mittens
skis

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★ 11th January at 10.45am. ★
★
★
★ Contact Marie for this class on 07875498316. ★
★ *****

Rowney Green Horticultural Society

Lindsay Smith writes...

The Rowney Green Horticultural Society meets at the Peace Hall on the second Thursday each month at 7.30 pm. At the meeting on 14th January 2016 our guest speaker will be Phil Aubury, former director of Birmingham Botanical Gardens and his subject will be "Pruning - the why, when and where?"

Guests are always welcome - £3.50 including refreshments. For more information please contact Lindsay Smith on 01527 592874.

The Midland Sinfonia presents Brass Delights

St. Lawrence Church, Alvechurch

Saturday 6 February 7 for 7.30pm

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For more information: marian@midlandsinfonia.co.uk or 0121 447 7040

The top 10 Bible stories: No. 5: The Ten Commandments

In this article we look at the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20), the law which God gave to Israel.

The computers that we use on a daily basis have thousands of component parts which can go wrong. We need the Maker's instructions to guide us when things go wrong and show us how to get the most out of them. Human beings are also wonderfully complex, physically, psychologically and spiritually. We also have a Maker's handbook to show us how God wants us to live. This is the 10 commandments, which God gave to Moses on Mt Sinai. *'And God spoke all these words: 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery''.* (Exodus 20:1,2).

If we want to grow to become more like God,

we have to take seriously the Commandments in our lives. The rest of the Bible could be described as God's repair manual, spelling out the gospel of grace that restores sin-damaged human beings to relationship with God.

How should we approach the 10 Commandments today? You may say *'I try to take them seriously, but every day I fail somewhere.'* We have to admit our weaknesses, but we can turn to God for pardon and forgiveness. In the power of the Spirit, Christ brings us a new kind of life, in which our heart's deepest desire will be to go God's way and obedience will no longer be a burden.

God says *'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.'* (Jeremiah 31:33). The word of command becomes a promise of obedience: *'You shall not...'*

Flowers for JANUARY

	3 January	10 January	17 January	24 January	31 January
Sanctuary		Lynda Wolstencroft		Hopwood WI	
Lady Chapel		Lynda Wolstencroft		Hopwood WI	
In memory of		Ken Broadway		Our departed members	

New Year 2016

*If we put our hand in God's hand
As we enter this New Year
Not knowing what the future holds
But that our Friend is near.*

*We shall not fear what lies ahead
If He is by our side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If He will be our guide.*

*The Sinless One from heaven came
To dwell with us on earth,
He sought and bought us with His blood
And offered us new birth.*

*Now as we travel through this year
He knows the things He's planned,
So let us trust and know just this -
Our times are in His hands.*

By Megan Carter

From The Registers



Funerals and Cremations

May they rest in the peace of Christ

December 7
December 16

Finlay Church
Edmund Dyer-Griffiths

Who's who

Rector	Revd Richard Bubbers, The Rectory, School Lane, 445 1087 stlaurencealvechurch@yahoo.co.uk
Licensed Lay Ministers	Mr Dick Russell, 2 Gothic Cottages, Radford Rd, 445 3083 Ms Sue Phillips, Withybed Green, 445 3620
Authorised Lay Ministers	Mrs Helena Allen, 117 Birmingham Road, 445 5605 Mr Martin Allen, 117 Birmingham Road, 445 5605 Mrs Philippa Brakes, 56 Callow Hill Road, 445 3983 Mr Graham Clark, The Coach House, School Lane, 445 2547 Mrs Lynne Clark, The Coach House, School Lane, 445 2547 Mr Michael Fletcher, 13 Red Lion Street, 447 8451 Mrs Annette Thomas, 8 Snake Lane, 445 5180 Ms Gloria Wilson, 11 Bear Hill Drive, 445 1854
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 Mr Andy Notley, 38 The Buckleys, B48 7NF
PCC Secretary	Mrs Enid Brumsen, 32 Callow Hill Road, 445 0663
PCC Treasurer	Mrs Susan Seeley, 40 Bear Hill, B48 7JX
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
Mum's the Word	Mrs Kate Grove, 07773509390
Flower Co-ordinator	Mrs Ann Thurrell, Top Barn, Scarfield Hill, 447 7668
Women's Fellowship	Mrs Jill Woolley, 111 Birmingham Road, 445 2125
Ark Booking Secretary) & Grapevine advertising) Grapevine Editor)	Mr Ian Price, The Ark, School Lane, 447 7955 thearkalvechurch@yahoo.co.uk

PCC Special Responsibilities

Finance and Standing Committee

Graham Clark	Mick Fletcher
Alison Smith	Bob Dale
Janet Wright	Susan Seeley

Children and Youth Committee

Martin Allen	Mick Fletcher
Thomas Birchall	Lynne Clark

Buildings, Fabric and Churchyard Committee

Mick Fletcher	Colin Bennett
David Richmond	Jill Woolley
Janet Wright	Lynne Clark

Task Committee

Mick Fletcher	Dick Russell
Graham Clark	Sue Phillips

Peru and Missionary Committee

Sue Phillips	Dick Russell
Gordon Parsons	Margaret Haste

Calendar for JANUARY



Thursday 7	9.30am	Mums The Word
Sunday 10	2.15pm	Alvechurch Village Society: A Walk around Birmingham's Canals: Meet at Alvechurch Railway Station car park (Rail ticket is £4.40p return)
Monday 11	7.30pm	Ark Angels WI: The Ark
Thursday 14	9.30am	Mums The Word
	12.30pm	Ark Café: Roast lamb
	7.30pm	Rowney Green Horticultural Society: Talk: Pruning - the why, when and where?: Peace Hall Rowney Green
		FEBRUARY GRAPEVINE GOES TO PRESS - <i>Articles to thearkalvechurch@yahoo.co.uk</i>
Thursday 21	9.30am	Mums The Word
	12.30pm	Ark Café: Mary Berry's Chicken Recipe
Friday 22	7.30pm	Churches Together Social: The Ark
	7.30pm	Alvechurch Village Society: Quiz: Alvechurch Village Hall
Wednesday 27	2.00pm	Alvechurch Women's Fellowship: Entertainment from Russell (Rusty) Smith: Tanyard Centre
Thursday 28	9.30am	Mums The Word
	12.30pm	Ark Café: Roast Pork

There will be no Tiny Tots service in January

PLEASE NOTE

We have a new deadline for Grapevine article submissions.

***The new deadline is the 14th of the month
(except December which is the 7th).***

Thank you.

Our thanks to Anthony Hill for the front cover photograph.

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