

The Grapevine

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ST LAURENCE CHURCH ALVECHURCH



DECEMBER 2016

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

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 (07792535661) 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



This Christmas don't get it horribly wrong

I wonder if you ever get things horribly wrong, making assumptions which prove to be far from the truth.

The other day I was telling the story of a minister who, like myself, conducts wedding services. At one particular wedding service and at the appropriate moment, the minister asked, as required by law, for anyone present who knows a reason why these persons should not lawfully marry, to declare it now.

The moment of silence was broken by a beautiful young woman carrying a child. She started walking towards the Minister, slowly from the back of the church.

Everything quickly turned to chaos. The bride slapped the groom. The groom's mother fainted. The best man and ushers started giving each other looks, wondering how best to help save the situation.

The Minister then asked the woman, "*Can you tell us why you came forward! What, do you have to say?*" Everyone fell silent, straining to hear what she would say.

The woman replied quite slowly, "*we just can't hear very well at the back.*"

Do you ever jump to conclusions, and get it horribly wrong?

This could happen for many people this Christmas. We could believe what we are told by the commercial interests around us that it is just a passing celebration, or we could look beyond what is on the surface for something deeper, more lasting and ultimately more satisfying. This is especially important, if we find Christmas to be a difficult time, because of the loss of a loved one or a relationship or a job or any kind of loss.

Recently someone was telling me that he had

Richard Bubbers writes...

not had a good experience of organised religion when he was younger, but he could not stop being intrigued by the person of Jesus Christ and his significance for the world.

The shepherds were of course told by the angel in Luke 2.10 – 12: "*do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.*"

He did not have a promising start to his human existence. He was born some 2000 years ago in poverty in a backwater of the Roman Empire and was reared in obscurity. He never went to university. He never held any office. He did not travel extensively. He never wrote a book.

When he died at the age of 33 after only three years of public ministry, he was deserted by his friends and after an unjust trial was nailed to a cross between two thieves. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave.

But he is remembered, when the great political leaders and philosophers of his day have come and gone.

His followers at the time claimed they had seen him alive again, and they were so clear on this that it changed the whole course of the rest of their lives; and his message spread far and wide right up until today when millions have been changed through encountering him and continue to follow him.

As the writer Dr James Francis said: "*No one has affected the life of mankind on earth as powerfully as that one solitary life.*"

He is worth exploring and finding out more about this Christmas. You will be very welcome at any of our services, and you will find details of our Christmas services at St Laurence's on page 14 of this Grapevine.

My wife and I, and everyone at St Laurence's, send our best wishes for a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

ACCUO ACCOUNTING LIMITED

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS
AND REGISTERED AUDITOR
40 BEAR HILL, ALVECHURCH
TELEPHONE 0121 445 2445

Email: david@accuo.co.uk

Website: www.accuo.co.uk

*We offer a comprehensive service
including book-keeping, payroll,
VAT, accounts and taxation for sole
traders, partnerships, charities and
limited companies.*

Contact David or Susan Seeley to
discuss how we can help you.

Registered to carry out Audit work by
the Institute of Chartered
Accountants in England & Wales

THOMAS BROTHERS

Funeral Directors

Prepayment Plan,

Private Chapels,

"Woodland Burial"

24 hour Personal Service

*A family-owned funeral directors
offering a friendly, dignified service,
paying attention to detail.*

12A Red Lion Street
Alvechurch B48 7LF
0121 445 3422
S.A.I.F.

A. Pullen

• MEMORIALS •

Additional Inscriptions
& Renovations



**All Work
is to the
Highest
Standard**

BRAMM

Showroom and Workshop
338 Alcester Road, Burcot,
Bromsgrove B60 1BH
Tel: (01527) 876200
07710976744

Rowney Green Flower Club

On 1st December 2016 we have our special Christmas evening with demonstrator Kate from In Bloom. This will be a lovely Christmas entertainment with beautiful flower arrangements and a Seasonal Buffet provided. Come along at 7.15pm to enjoy the spread and the demonstration commences at 7.45pm. Contacts: Celia Hitch 0121 445 4824 and Clare Kenny 01527 66071.

The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

Tony Brannon writes...

The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society's next meeting is on **December 6th**. As it's December we will be holding our annual Natter, Noggin, Fun Quiz & Musical Bingo night. Team maximum of 4/5 for the quiz.

All welcome you do not need to be a member but if you are not members then please contact Tony Brannon on 07763 468893 or email fiftyeight@talktalk.net to register your team advising how many will be in it. Very limited space is available in the meeting room so it's on a 'first come first served' basis with preference given to members. 7.45pm for an 8pm start. Meetings are held in the meeting room at the rear of The Weighbridge pub.

St Laurence Women's Fellowship



Jill Woolley writes...

At our meeting in October Richard Churchley's talk about unusual Saints and Churches was very informative particularly as several are to be found in Worcestershire.

At our meeting on **December 14th** - not our usual Wednesday - we will celebrate Christmas with a shared lunch starting at 1.00pm.

We start the programme for 2017 on **January 25th** when Ann Davenport a courier for Johnson's Coaches will tell of her travels. On **February 22nd** we will be entertained by Tony Bredon the Music Man.

Fancy something new in the New Year? Come and join us in the Tanyard Centre at 2pm. We send everyone our Christmas Greetings and every good wish for the New Year.

The Midland Sinfonia Concert by Candlelight

Friday 2 December 2016 7pm for 7.30pm

St Laurence Church, Alvechurch

Concert by Candlelight

Corelli – Christmas Concerto

Mendelssohn – String Symphony No.10

Neruda – Trumpet Concerto

Mozart – Divertimento in B flat

Tchaikovsky – Elegy

Handel – Concerto Grosso in A

The Midland Sinfonia with Anthony
Thompson on trumpet



As those of you have enjoyed this splendid annual concert before will know it is a great evening and a wonderful start to the festive season with a glass of punch and a mince pie.

Tickets: on the door £14.50, in advance £13 from The Village Green Grocer, Alvechurch or book online at www.midlandsinfonia.co.uk
FT students and schoolchildren accompanying an adult free.

For more information:
midlandsinfonia@gmail.com or 0121 447 7040.

"Rectory Cottage Bed and Breakfast" Old Rectory Lane, Alvechurch

offers
warm and welcoming accommodation,
with super breakfasts and attractive,
spacious bedrooms.



Contact Celia on
0121 445 4824, or visit our website
[www. rectorycottage-alvechurch.co.uk](http://www.rectorycottage-alvechurch.co.uk)

WHERE NEXT ASSOCIATION

Garden Centre

Opening hours

Mon-Fri 9 to 5, Sat 10 to 4

Woodwork

Packing / assembly

Landscaping / maintenance

Support your local charity which offers people
with special needs the opportunity to
experience the real world of work.

Wellesbourne Close
Easemore Road, Redditch
B98 8ER
01527 69955



KenDry

Eco-Friendly Carpet
Cleaning That
Doesn't Cost The Earth

Ken Wainwright
of
Alvechurch

0121 445 4247

www.kendry.co.uk

GARDEN MAINTENANCE SERVICE

Semi-retired commercial grower of bedding plants, shrubs & climbers for 35 years.

Looking for work within the Parish for a low cost approach.

**PLEASE PHONE TONY
THE PLANT MAN
ON**

**07881527117 (ANY TIME)
01527 63375 (AFTER DUSK)**



THE LAWNS
RESIDENTIAL CARE

Exceptional quality accommodation for senior adults and the elderly.

24 hour care from professional, caring staff.

All set within beautiful gardens and terraces.

School Lane, Alvechurch, B48 7SB
Tel: 0121 445 4098
Fax: 0121 445 4544
www.thelawnscare.co.uk

Kathryn Collinson

BA Hons, BEd Hons, ALCM

Lessons
from
20 minutes
to
1 hour



Music tuition – All Styles

- Classical, Bass and Electric Guitar
- Piano and Keyboard
- For exams or just for fun

Maths and English Tuition

- SATS / confidence building
- Special needs
- Ages from 5-11 years

Tel: 0121 445 3523

Alvechurch Baptist Church Christmas Tree Festival 2016

Revd Fiona Lee writes...



The time is almost here! From Sunday 11th – Sunday 18th December, Alvechurch Baptist Church will be lit up with Christmas trees, decorated through the words of a carol by organisations and groups from around the village. Here is the programme of events taking place during the Festival - you will be most welcome, and this gives us all the chance to be part of something very special at this time of year:

Sunday 11th December – refreshments from 3pm, with the Festival Opening Carol Service at 4:30pm;

Monday 12th December – church open from 10am to see the trees and enjoy some quiet time, Children's Activity Afternoon from 3:30-5pm;

Tuesday 13th December – church open from 10am, Business Lunch from 12-3pm, Informal Concert with Withybed Poets and the harp from 6-7pm;

Wednesday 14th December – church open from 10am, Simple Lunch available from 12-2pm, Christingle Service and Afternoon Tea 2:30-4pm, The Lounge Christmas Market and Food from 7pm;

Thursday 15th December – church open from 10am, ABC Study Group Christmas Readings 10:30-11:30am, Simple Lunch available 12-2pm, Bellringers Afternoon 2:30-4pm, church open until 7pm;

Friday 16th December – church open from 10am, Tots Christmas Service 11am, Simple Lunch available from 12-2pm, church open with Crafty Ladies in the afternoon and continuing until 8pm;

Saturday 17th December – church open from 10am, Alvechurch Community Concert at 11am, church open until 1pm;

Sunday 18th December – Christmas all-age Festival Service 10:30am, Christmas Tea 4:30pm, Carols by Candlelight (including Bellringers and Withybed Poets), 6pm.

St Laurence Churchyard

Andy Humphries writes...

The churchyard year is fading fast with Christmas not too far away, so time for an "end-of-term" report. 2016 weather has been fairly kind, especially a dryish Autumn and the churchyard has been looking reasonably tidy most of the time. For that I'd like to thank our main volunteers, Barry & Lizzie Lunn and Basil Booth, for all their hard work during the year. They've put in hours of mowing and strimming, even after our churchyard stores were broken into again in June. The thieves levered off a secure lock-box on the shipping container and took all the portable tools, so we've now fitted internal bolts and an alarm system to the container, plus a camera on the outside. That's 3 burglaries in 3 years ...hugely frustrating ...but the volunteers gritted their teeth and just kept going, for several weeks managing without some tools and with others stored off-site. They deserve a real pat on the back !

The winter months will see those volunteers doing their usual pruning and cutting back, with the occasional bonfire to get rid of the large amount of material involved. We hope you'll understand that a few fires are necessary and hope they don't cause too many issues for near-neighbours of the church. Last winter we took out a few ash trees that had grown around the churchyard and we'll be removing some more this winter.

In the last 3 years the volunteers have had a couple of pieces of equipment donated by local people....a small mower and a leaf collector....both invaluable. If you or a neighbour is thinking of passing on a machine that's too big for you, maybe you might think of helping us by donating it ? It would be much appreciated.

Finally...the vast majority of our visitors treat the churchyard with respect and we're grateful for that. Can we politely ask dog walkers to keep their dogs on leads and bag-up their faeces.... and ask all visitors to leave flowers and plastic bags in the bins provided rather than outside them, where animals can rip them open. We empty those bins twice a week but if they are full, please help us by taking the rubbish to the large yellow wheelie bin in the turning circle near The Lawns. As in previous years, we'll leave Christmas wreaths on graves until the end of February, but then clear them as they will have died. If you wish to re-use a wreath, please remove it before then.

Thank you for your support.



Husband & Wife Decorators

Fast, Clean Work
Excellent References
Reasonable Rates
Free Quotes
Call Barry or Marie on
01527 540169
07930 452036
email:
bshakles@yahoo.co.uk

Spring View Care Nursing Home



Spring View Care provides small homely nursing home where our residents are at the heart of everything. We aim to provide nursing homes where we ourselves would be happy to stay. We operate two high quality Nursing Homes:
1: Grosvenor House in Alvechurch
2: Tutnall Hall in Bromsgrove
To arrange a visit call
Tel: 0121 445 0033
www.springviewcare.co.uk



Our local care team has been providing award winning quality homecare since 1989.

We offer a homecare service from 30 minutes per week to full-time Live-in Care, which enables you or your loved one to remain at home with compassion and dignity.

To find out how we can help,
call: 01527 810 889 or
visit: www.helpinghands.co.uk

J & D Mason

OPTICIANS

Providing Quality Eyecare
For Over 30 Years

Selected Designer Frames
HALF PRICE

23 The Square
Alvechurch
B48 7LA
0121 447 8682

Huntleys Funeral Services

A life well remembered lives on. A funeral is a time to say goodbye and to remember the life of a person you love. It's our privilege to be at your side. Visit us at www.huntleysfunerals.co.uk

Redditch
58 Ipsley Street
01527 62106



Funeral Partners
funeralpartners.co.uk



Burcot Grange Residential Care Setting for the Elderly

A unique blend of luxury country house living and quality forward thinking care. Burcot Grange is the perfect place for retirement living.

Long term care

Individually designed independent living suites

Short stay convalescent and holiday accommodation

For more information or to arrange a visit go to www.burcotgrange.com
Burcot Grange, 23 Greenhill, Burcot, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 1BJ.
0121 445 5552 admin@burcotgrange.com

The Ark Café



I hope that all of you that have booked for our Christmas lunches on 1st and 8th December enjoy the meal, entertainment provided and raffle. The proceeds from the raffles this year will be donated to the Montgomery Heights Orphanage in Zimbabwe.

The Cafe will reopen in the New Year on Thursday, 12th January and in the meantime a big thank you to all our customers who have supported us in 2016 and to all our volunteers who have helped throughout the year and a Happy Christmas to all.

Hillside at Alvechurch WI

Cathy Taylor writes...

We had an interesting and entertaining talk at our November meeting given by Yvonne Cocks. Yvonne told us about her career as the first female paramedic in Hereford and Worcester. She had spent time working for the Air Ambulance Service and gained considerable experience in that work.

Future Events

Christmas meal on Thursday 1st December at Barnt Green Cricket Club at 7 for 7.30pm. Members are asked to bring Christmas Bell tree decorations with them. These will be used to decorate our tree at the Baptist Church on December 11th when we will join other organisations to celebrate Christmas with decorated Christmas Tree.

W.I. Carol Service 8th December 2pm at the Kingswood Meeting House, Packhorse Lane, Wythall.



Christmas & New Year Wishes

Rosina, John and Caroline Spreckley send best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all friends and neighbours.

Rowney Green Horticultural Society

Lindsay Smith writes...

The usual monthly meeting will not be held in December 2016. Our next meeting at The Peace Hall will be held on Thursday, 12th January 2017 at 7.30 pm, more details will be shown in the January edition The Grapevine. New Members will be very welcome at the start of our 2017 Horticultural Year which includes excellent speakers on various subjects and organised trips in the summer. The Committee would like to take this opportunity to wish all readers a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

For more information please telephone Lindsay Smith on 01527 592874.

Alvechurch Historical Society

Hilary Taylor writes...

OUR NEXT MEETING is on Monday 5th December, when Max Keen will present a talk called "*King John: The worst or most useful English King?*".

This concludes a year of talks covering a wide variety of subjects. From writers to royalty, from adventure on the high seas to adventure on the high road, and ranging across the centuries from the middle ages to the mid-twentieth century.

FUTURE DATES - There will be no meeting in January, and our 2017 programme begins on Monday 6th February with the AGM.

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.

Jazz At The Ark

Margaret Haste (Fund Raising Co-ordinator) writes...

A huge thank you to all who came along to the Ark on the evening of 21st October. We were treated to an evening of great traditional jazz thanks to the Sauce City Jazz Band and the sum of £711 was raised in the process. This will go towards the Stained Glass Windows Appeal. The Band have promised to return next year so.....watch this space.

James Giles & Sons

A FAMILY OWNED FUNERAL DIRECTORS
ESTABLISHED 1916

**Serving all communities
with dignity and
understanding**

- Private Chapel of Rest
- Day and Night Service
- Woodland Burial
- Golden Charter and Help the Aged Funeral Plans
- Catering and Floral Tributes

Telephone 01527 872318
24 Stourbridge Road
Bromsgrove, Worcs, B61 0AE



- Letterheads
- Brochures
- Business cards
- Pull up Banners
- Flyers
- Envelopes

**Full Design
& Print
Service**

www.positive-print.co.uk
Email: sales@positive-print.co.uk

0121 459 3454

26 Castle Road, Kings Norton Business Centre
Birmingham B30 3HZ

The Answer's Yes!



- Fault Finding/ Repairs
- Extra Lights and Sockets
- New Fuse Boards
- Rewires
- Landlord Inspections
- Qualified Electrician
- Free Quotes
- Fully Insured
- Tidy Work
- Reliable Service
- Satisfaction Guaranteed

Call Nat on:

01527 878316 or 07791 923459

www.njmelectrical.com

WE ACCEPT DEBIT AND CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS



Christmas Poems



Christmas is multifaceted: for Christians, it's a time to pause and wonder at the miracle of the Christmas story, God entering this world as a dependent child, beginning on the road that leads to death and Easter and resurrection, and encompasses the wide breadth of human experience. It's a time for celebrating family life, and all the rich traditions of giving and sharing; a time for presents, and food, board games, winter walks and Christmas TV, a time for relaxing and enjoying the season. But it's also a time of overindulgence; of overspending and over eating and getting drawn in to the commercialism of it all, followed by the post-Christmas 'blues' as the credit card statement arrives.

Here are three poems expressing some of the joy and of the tension that the Christmas season brings. They are written by three members of Withybed poets and reproduced here with permission.

Christmas



Winter means woodsmoke, mulled wine, and snow,
Frost on the windscreen, ice on the paths,
Dark mornings, short days, and a lingering dusk
Which begins at teatime, when the lamps are lit,
And before the curtains are drawn,
From the street we see our lives
Wrapped in a warm cocoon, on the other side
of the glass.

Winter is kind to the rich, cosily wrapped up
from the cold,
Choosing gifts and a lighted tree for the festive
season,
Caught up in the spending spree, and a
tinselled world,
Busy with parties, and cooking, and family fun.
But the poor, and the lonely, and those who
step aside
May hear a different music under the tinny
tunes,
And glimpse the real Christmas,
When a poor homeless couple find shelter in a
shed
And a baby is born, and angels sing,
And God takes the hands of the helpless,
And leads them home.

Jenna Plewes 2007



Christmas



Which is it to be?
Awe at mysterious vulnerability,
Emmanuel;

or festive fun with the next generation
of children with sparkling eyes full of
anticipation,
a celebration of family
a time to seek ways of delighting, surprising
with stuff that I hope will bring joy.

It's a time of contrasts,
sometimes incompatible claims on my heart,
that inner place, that core of who I am
that place reserved for moments of what I call
love

Meeting their loneliness
and for brief moments covering it
with untidy spent wrappings and torn off
labels,
aromas that tantalise the palate,
smells that linger creating a store of memories
of days when grannies were old

And still I'm torn
The myths of Santa colliding with
The incredible reality of incarnation.

Sue Phillips 2007



Christmasquerade



Goodness gracious, Christmas is nearly here. It's been creeping ever closer, since Boxing Day last year.

The T.V. ads are frantic, luring to spend your cash,

On so much superfluity, an abundance of gaudy trash.

All that glisters is not gold, it's likely made of tin,

One way or another, it will probably go in the bin.

Ask yourself beforehand "Shall I give it a place, Or will it turn out to be a sorry waste of space ?"

If you buy any more raiment it will be a sorry clanger,

There's no more room in your wardrobe for even one more hanger.

If you gobble one more mince pie, it'll go straight on your hips,

Put more weight upon you than a bucket of fish and chips.

So be a fine upstanding Scrooge, like me and my Midas friend,

Your piggy bank will groan with money, if only you buck the trend.

Gordon Parsons 2016



May 2016 be a Christmas that leaves you fulfilled in all aspects; in giving and receiving, in the sacred and the traditional.

Sue Phillips



Alvechurch Library

Christmas Bedtime Stories

We shall be holding our **Christmas bedtime stories** on **Monday 19th December** for children aged 1 and upwards. Children can come dressed in their pyjamas and listen to festive Christmas stories, a special visitor may join us too. The cost is £1.50 per child, if you wish to book your child in for this event, phone up or pop into Alvechurch Library soon as tickets are limited. Early session 5.30pm, later session 6.30pm.

Want to get your Christmas Shopping online?

Need a little help negotiating the internet. Our Digital Champion volunteers offer **FREE** one to one beginner computer lessons on Tuesday and Friday mornings. For more details and to book a session please contact the library.

Introduction to Creative Writing

This five week course, on a Saturday morning provides an introduction to different aspects of creating theme, plot setting and character. Supported by discussion of short extracts from literature, participants will have the opportunity to develop their own writing.

Saturday 7th January 2017, 10.30 - 12.30, Theme, choosing your subject.

Saturday 14th January, 10.30 - 12.30, Plot, developing your story.

Saturday 21st January, 10.30 - 12.30, Setting, writing descriptively to create your location.

Saturday 28th January, 10.30 - 12.30, Character, developing your characters through description and dialogue

Saturday 4th February, 10.30 – 12.30, Writing a complete piece of short original fiction. 5 x 2 hours of tuition with Janet in Alvechurch Library, £36.00.

iPad for Beginners

A brilliant starter course for anyone who has just purchased their own iPad. The workshop covers the basics such as turning the device on and off, the settings, how to open and close apps, how to take photos and how to use the internet. **Friday 13th January 2017**, 2.15pm - 4.15pm, £19.00.

For any Adult Learning Courses please pop into the Library to book in and pay by cash or cheque. Alternatively book online and pay using your debit or credit card. For all other enquires please pop into the library on the Birmingham Road or contact the library through calling The Hub on 01905 822722 or Email AlvechurchLib@worcestershire.gov.uk

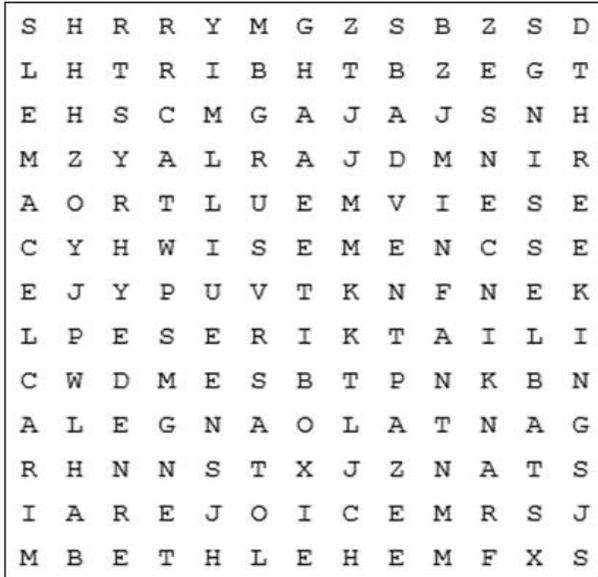
Website www.worcestershire.gov.uk

Find us on Facebook.

Kids Corner



Joy to the World



ADVENT
ANGEL
BETHLEHEM
BIRTH
BLESSINGS
CAMELS
FRANKINCENSE

INFANT
JESUS
JOSEPH
MAGI
MANGER
MARY
MIRACLE

MYRRH
NATIVITY
REJOICE
STABLE
STAR
THREE KINGS
WISE MEN



Charity Begins at Christmas

After the Advent church service, eight year old Lee said to the preacher: *'When I grow up, I'm going to give you some money.'*

'Well, thank you, the preacher replied, but why?'

'Because my father says that you're one of the poorest preachers we've ever had.'



Letter from the Bishop Of Dudley

Creating a Manger in our Lives.

A fable from my childhood came to mind recently. It went something like this:

In the carpenter's shop the tools were tetchy.

"Brother Hammer, you're too noisy."

"Me? Brother Plane's work is all superficial. No depth."

"Me? Brother Tape Measure is always telling others what to do, measuring us all by his own standards."

"Me? It's Brother Screwdriver who drives us all crazy going round in circles."

"Me? Sister Sandpaper always rubbing the wrong way."

"Me? Sister Saw goes back and forth endlessly."

Then the footsteps of the carpenter could be heard and the bickering ceased. When he entered the shop, he put on his apron, went to his bench, and picked up Brother Tape Measure, then Brother Plane, then Brother Hammer and Sister Screwdriver, then Sister Saw, and lastly Sister Sandpaper, whom he used to smooth all the rough edges of the manger he had made. A manger for a herd of animals to snuffle their noses in so as to find the oats in the bleak midwinter.

Perhaps through the season of Advent we should make a manger in our lives, being guided by he who learnt these skills in a Nazareth workshop.

Measure where we are in relation to he who gave the length of his.

Plane away the places where forgiveness is needed.

Hammer against the injustices of the world and screw together the fragments in need of reconciliation.

Saw away the dead branches that need to be pruned so that we might grow.

Sand the rough edges of our tongues, our thoughts, our lack of generosity.

In such a way we respond to the invitation *"come let us walk in the light of the Lord"* and Jesus is laid again in the manger of our lives and our communities.

From the manger he looks at us, and the whole world, with eyes of peace and forgiveness and love. Just as he will when others use their carpentry skills to fix a wooden beam to a tree outside a city wall.

Travel well this Advent in the company of the master carpenter and see again his most amazing creation, not in wood and nails, but in flesh and blood.



Flowers for DECEMBER



By tradition there are no flowers in church again until Christmas Day. I will be in church on Friday 23rd December from 9.30am to decorate for the Christmas services. I really would like some help with this most enjoyable task. Please, please get in touch with me either personally in church, by telephone or email to offer help. I would be very happy to have some of our lovely children coming along to lend a hand and to add their special touch to the arrangements.

Ann Thurrell
0121 447 7668

Parish Prayers

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

- 4 December – Warbank Close and Weatheroak Hill
- 11 December – Willow Brook Road and Withybead Close
- 18 December – Withybed Lane and Woodpecker Close



Christmas Services

The churches in Alvechurch are preparing for the special services during the Christmas season.

St Laurence will hold the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols at 6 PM on **Sunday 18 December**. This is part of a long tradition of telling the Christmas story in readings and music with some well-known carols for everyone.

St Laurence will hold two Family Nativity Services on **Christmas Eve** (Saturday this year), which will include favourite carols and the story of the Nativity: children are preparing to perform in the drama at the **4 PM** service and at the **6 PM** service.

The Midnight Communion Service on **Christmas Eve** at St Laurence begins at **11:30 PM** and welcomes in Christmas Day.

There will be one service for everyone on **Christmas Day** (Sunday) with an All-age Communion Service at St Laurence on Christmas morning at **10:30 AM**.

From The Registers



Funerals and Cremations

May they rest in the peace of Christ

November 14

Tom Willis

Who's who

Rector	Revd Richard Bubbers, Priest-in-charge, 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 Mr Roger Wardle, 21 Brookside Close, B48 7LW, 445 0505
PCC Secretary	Mrs Lysandra Notley, 38 The Buckleys, B48 7NF
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
Mum's the Word	Mrs Natalie Wise, 07792535661
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	

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
Andy Humphries	Alison Smith

Task Committee

Mick Fletcher	Dick Russell
Graham Clark	Sue Phillips

Peru and Missionary Committee

Sue Phillips	Dick Russell
Gordon Parsons	Margaret Haste
Sally Bubbers	

Calendar for DECEMBER



Thursday 1	9.30am	Mums The Word: The Ark
	10.00am	Christmas Themed Tiny Tots Service: The Ark: Sarah Linton
	12.15pm	Ark Café: Roast Turkey Christmas Lunch - SOLD OUT
	7.15pm	Rowney Green Flower Club: Christmas evening with demonstrator Kate from In Bloom: Peace Hall, Rowney Green
Friday 2	7 for 7.30pm	The Midland Sinfonia Candlelit Concert: St Laurence Church
Monday 5	7.45pm	Alvechurch Historical Society: Talk by Max Keen: <i>"King John: The worst or most useful English King?"</i> : Museum, School Lane
Tuesday 6	7.30pm	The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society: Natter, Noggin, Fun Quiz & Musical Bingo: Weighbridge pub meeting rm
Wednesday 7		JANUARY GRAPEVINE GOES TO PRESS (PLEASE NOTE EARLY DATE) <i>articles to thearkalvechurch@yahoo.co.uk</i>
Thursday 8	9.30am	Mums The Word: The Ark
	12.15pm	Ark Café: Roast Turkey Christmas Lunch - SOLD OUT
Monday 12	12.30pm	Forget-Me-Nots: Bring & Share Christmas Party: The Ark
	7.30pm	Ark Angels WI: The Ark
Wednesday 14	1.00pm	St Laurence Women's Fellowship: Christmas Shared Lunch: Tanyard Centre, Alvechurch
Thursday 15	9.30am	Mums the Word No Ark Café today
Sunday 18	6.00pm	Service of Nine Lessons and Carols: St Laurence Church
CHRISTMAS EVE		
Saturday 24	4.00pm	Family Nativity Service: St Laurence Church
	6.00pm	Family Nativity Service: St Laurence Church
	11.30pm	Midnight Communion Service: St Laurence Church
CHRISTMAS DAY		
Sunday 25	10.30am	All-age Christmas Morning Communion Service: St L Church

