

The Grapevine

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ST LAURENCE CHURCH ALVECHURCH



JANUARY 2020

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

On the 2nd Sunday of the month (4th in January), there will be a United Service (Churches Together in Alvechurch and Rowney Green), rotating between Alvechurch Baptist Church, St Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Rowney Green Shared Church and ourselves

At Rowney Green Shared Church

9.30am Methodist/Anglican Service

DAILY SERVICE

9.00am Monday to Friday in St Laurence Church

ORGANISATIONS

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 (Mum's the Word) - Thursdays 9.30am to 11.10am in The Ark
Tiny Tots Service - 10.45am 4th Thursday of the month (sarah100work@gmail.com)**

Ark Cafe - 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

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Richard Bubbers writes...

The meaning of life?

As we contemplate 2020 and what it may hold, another New Year may challenge our attitude to what is important. At the time of writing, I do not know the outcome of the general election on 12 December: I am hearing arguments for who to vote for to make our country happy and successful.

A friend was given Alexa for Christmas, a small machine that sits in your house and listens in on your conversations. If you summon it by name, Alexa can play music of your choice, provide information, tell you about the weather, give you the news and sports scores, and control devices in your home, such as lighting, heating or a burglar alarm. The difficulty comes when Alexa is asked more important questions like: "*are you happy?*" or "*what's the meaning of life?*"

The next big thing in technology will be quantum computing: normal computers work by carrying out tasks one by one, and they are binary so the basic unit of information – a bit – can only have a value of zero or one. When you apply quantum mechanics to computing, tasks can be carried out much more quickly: the qubit, the unit of information in quantum computing, can be zero or one or both at the same time. This means that quantum computers can carry out an almost limitless number of different calculations at the same time.

We can be rightly enthusiastic about the things new technology can do for us. Machines are appearing to be more and more "*intelligent*". But Jaron Larnier, the technologist who was responsible among

other things for the development of the MP3 system for music transmission, gives a stark warning if humans choose to make themselves subject to things they have made, - in other words, it is dangerous to worship them. A machine is always an "*it*", and not a person.

The Bible speaks of humans being made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1): human beings have a particular place within creation - we are aware of our presence in space and time, and are named and gendered and embodied.

Machines are good servants but bad masters. Machines may help us with data and information, but human beings look for meaning. The big things of life - such as love, death, suffering, infinity, God, grace - are not so much problems to be solved but mysteries to be entered. The French philosopher, Gabriel Marcel, talked about the difference between a problem and a mystery: a problem has been seen before and can be fixed, but a mystery is unique and one-of-a-kind and has not been encountered by you before - you have to bring your whole life experience to engage with it, but it can lead to real transformation and personal growth. Perhaps it is better to see most of the world's current big problems as mystery rather than as a problem – this is why we find it difficult to "*solve*" them!

God, the creator of the universe, did not try to solve our problems at arm's-length but came and humbly entered into our mystery, as we remember at Christmas.

Continues of page 4

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The wonder is that God is not a critical spectator, but the ultimate participant: God in Christ took on our humanity and identified with us by becoming a human being. The good news is that God is with us, and we are not alone. As we see from the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God loves us and cares for us, and we can have hope.

St Paul in Philippians 2 describes Jesus Christ like this: *"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."*

May we increasingly discover deeper meaning and understanding in our lives, as we explore and journey through this New Year. With all good wishes for 2020.

A Date To Remember In 2020

Jill Woolley Writes...

The World Day of Prayer will once again be held on the first Friday of March - March 6th 2020. It is a Women led Global Ecumenical Movement and the service next year has been prepared by the women of Zimbabwe whose country has been plagued with difficulties and unrest for many years and are in need of our prayers.

Our service in Alvechurch is being planned and details will be available in the New Year. As we take part we will be joining in prayer with people in over 120 countries and islands around the world. Do join us if you can.

Alvechurch WI

Pam Horsfield writes...

It's hard to think another year has gone and we're back wishing everyone 'A very Happy Christmas'. We also wish everyone a healthy and enjoyable 2020. For one or two of our members who are having ongoing health problems, the thoughts of us are willing you onward to come back to our events.

For all new members who've joined us this year, we're very pleased you've joined and hope you've had a good time; for those of you thinking you might like to come but feel uncertain, just come along and meet us for yourselves. Contact presidentalvechurchwi@gmail.com if you feel that you'd like another person to be with you for your initial evening.

Our December meeting hasn't happened before we go to print so we hope the speaker on '*Christmas past to Christmas present*', with mulled wine and mince pies after, puts us in the festive mood for our faith, family and friends this month.

January's meeting will get us having fun joining in, or watching, bhangra dancing with Vijay. Vivien Clifton enjoyed this experience at Webheath WI and said they had a fabulous time with lots of laughter. If you fancy having a light-hearted go at this, then join us in Alvechurch Village Hall at 7:30pm on Monday January 13th.

Alvechurch Historical Society

Hilary Taylor writes...

There is no meeting in January, but AGM will be held on the first Monday in February, and the first talk of 2020 on the first Monday in March.

The next edition of The Grapevine will have more details, but meanwhile our chairman Anne Humphries, can be contacted on 0121 445 5955.

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Ark Tots and Toddlers Group at St Laurence church

Sarah Linton writes...

Are you a Parent, Grandparent or Carer looking after a baby or little ones who are not yet in full-time school?

Would you like a friendly play environment to bring them along to?

A warm welcome awaits you and your Little Ones, for our Stay and Play group at St Laurence church. Held in the Ark from **9.30am – 11.00am** on Thursdays during school term times. It's a relaxed and friendly time to chat and to play with your Little Ones with a wide range of toys and activities and on-going refreshments. At the end of each session we finish with a singing time.

Although we don't make a specific charge, we welcome your contribution towards the facilities, refreshments and new toys/equipment.

So do come and join us as often as you wish. We look forward to welcoming you.

Tiny Tots in Church

Once a month we have an opportunity for you to bring your Little Ones through into the church.

At the end of our Ark Tots and Toddlers session, instead of our usual singing time, we invite you to our Tiny Tots Service. You are welcome to come and join in this short, very relaxed and informal time of singing and interactive Bible story, designed especially for babies and toddlers to move around in in their own way!

During the normal Ark Tots and Toddler session that day, there is a craft activity available, which relates to that month's Bible story. So do come over to our craft table and have a go at the activity with your Toddler or Child. Our Tiny Tots Services are usually on the **4th Thursday at 10.45am**. This month's Tiny Tots Service will be on **Thursday January 23rd**.

Sunday Club at St Laurence church

Sarah Linton writes...

Do you have children and young people and would like to bring them along to a church Family Service?

As part of the **weekly 9.30 Family Service** St Laurence provides a range of activities for Toddlers and children of all ages. The beginning and end parts of each service are spent in the church with their families. During the middle, more adult-focused part of the service activities for the different age groups are available through in The Ark, with adult leaders.

Each Sunday we have our Jack-in-the-Box Group for **children aged 7 and under**. Jack, the loveable Labrador puppet, introduces the Bible story and theme for that Sunday, with songs, interactive Bible story and craft activity.

Parents are also welcome to bring **babies and toddlers** through into The Ark during Sunday Club time, to join in with Jack-in-the-Box or just wander around and play with the toys provided. There is also a toy area within the Choir Vestry at the back of the church, which can be freely accessed at all time through the service, as well as activity backpacks to take into the pews with babies and young children.

For Young People aged 8 and over a different and varied range of fun and interesting activities are planned week by week.

For young people aged 11 to 14, we are running an Alpha Youth course on Sunday evenings in the Ark from 6 pm to 8 pm, beginning on 12 January and running through to 29 March (apart from half term), exploring life, faith and meaning. For more information, please contact Richard Bubbers, our Rector.

So come along and join us as we worship together Sunday by Sunday.

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The Ark Cafe

Welcome to a New Year for the Ark Cafe and we look forward to having you all back to the Cafe for another year. Please encourage all you friends to come for lunch on a Thursday as we would like to increase our lunch numbers.

The menu for January is as follows:

January 9th Cottage Pie

January 16th Somerset Chicken

January 23rd Roast Lamb

January 30th Glazed Gammon and Parsley Sauce

We look forward to seeing you all in January 2020 and to your continued support.

www.where-next.org.uk

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www.where-next.org.uk Charity No 517348

Alzheimer's Society

are looking for volunteers in your area!



Would you like to help a person living with dementia continue to do the things they really enjoy, but may need support due to how their dementia is affecting them? If yes, then Alzheimer's Society would really like to hear from you!

Our side by side service is operating in your area: if you would like to help someone continue to do the things they really enjoy, and help combat the loneliness and social isolation people living with dementia can experience, then please do get in touch. You could really make a difference to someone by helping them stay in touch with their local community.

All our volunteers are given extensive training, and you will be supported by an experienced red manager.

If you would like to know more, please contact Ade Couper, our side by side coordinator on 07885 228891 or by email ade.couper@alzheimers.org.uk



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Alvechurch Village Society Walks

Walks are held on the first Sunday of the month, unless this conflicts with a Bank Holiday. Weather conditions occasionally mean a walk has to be cancelled; check with the leaders if necessary.

Sunday 5th January

A walk "Around Forhill from the Peacock Inn", led by Gerard & Yvonne Nash starting at the Peacock Inn car park at 2.30pm.

Sunday 2nd February

A walk "Via the Canals and Back", led by Hilary Taylor starting at Tanyard Lane car park at 2.30pm.



Rowney Green Horticultural Society

Lindsay Smith writes...

ROWNEY GREEN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY meets at the Village Hall on the second Thursday of each month at 7.30pm.

At the start of our new monthly 2020 programme with exciting Speakers throughout the year; on Thursday, 9th January we welcome Phil Aubury, former Director of Birmingham Botanical Gardens and his subject will be "Garden Ponds and Water Features". Guests are always welcome - £3.50 including refreshments.

For more information please contact Lindsay Smith on 01527 592874.

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More details next month. For tickets see details above.





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The first of a series of short monthly Autobiographical Rambles from DICK RUSSELL

At the end of last month I shall have hung up my Blue Scarf; that is to say that I will have retired from active service as a Reader.

I thought it might be of interest, for some of our readers at any rate, to sum up, in serial form, some experiences, thoughts, and history of the years that have passed during the period that my lay ministry occupied, set in the context of this parish, and the changes that have occurred in the Church of England, of Christianity in general, and especially in our own land during that time, and how these have impinged on the understandings of people generally, of whom I have witnessed.

This month I begin with The Prologue:

It began with a young schoolteacher cycling down The Rise in Hopwood in 1959, freewheeling until, having passed over the canal, and the road had flattened out, began to use the pedals, and he reached the speed to operate some power. Suddenly there was a clicking sound and the chain came off the mechanism, and he ended up being jolted off the saddle onto the side of the road.



Having picked himself up, he felt, then saw, a sore scrape-mark on his knee oozing a little blood and covered with grit from a tear in one of his trouser-legs, and likewise on an elbow, through a torn sleeve. He fixed the chain back in position, which covered his hands in dirty oil, and resumed his ride.

He had started his ride in Northfield, where he had been living *'in digs'* as it was called in those days, which he was doing because the master of the house in which he lodged had been promoted from bank clerk to bank manager in another town. He had seen an advert placed by somebody who had moved to 5 Randall Avenue Alvechurch recently; a new address, in fact, as it had only just been built and the road itself had not as yet become completed. He reached it and knocked on the front door. It was opened by a Mrs Brinkworth, who, seeing the state he was in, re-acted in a motherly way, saying *"Oh, what's happened to you?, come in and wash yourself down, I'll draw you some hot soapy water"*. This was followed by a welcome cup of tea. It did not take me long to decide I would be happy here, for the unfortunate cyclist was I, and I was so readily made to feel fortunate indeed.



Winter Word Search

Instructions: Try to find all of the hidden Winter words in the word search puzzle below.
(Words can be spelled forwards, backwards, diagonally, up, or down.)

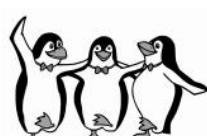
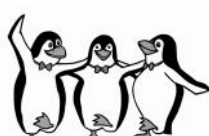


Word List

BLANKET	HAT	ICY
BOBSLEDS	HEATER	JANUARY
COZY	HIBERNATE	SNOWFLAKES
FEBRUARY	HOLIDAY	TOBOGGAN
GLOVES	ICE	WARMTH



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Valentines Special

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Obituary

Raymond Brian Woodcock

22nd May 1938 to 13th October 2019

Raymond Brian Woodcock, known as Ray, was born on 22nd May, 1938, the second born identical twin to Reg. At 2 ½ years of age, their home was bombed during the Second World War, after heavy shelling in Birmingham.

At 16, he was offered an apprenticeship at Joseph Lucas, during which time he attended Aston University, studying engineering and design. He worked hard, later achieving a Master's degree in Automotive engineering at Cranfield.

He was very inventive and quickly got promoted at Lucas, to be their Chief Engineer, travelling widely to lecture to other automobile companies in Japan, American, Germany, France, South Africa, Italy and India. He quickly amassed new orders from his knowledge and was commissioned to work in Madras, India for two years, accompanied by Anita (Neat) his wife. They both felt uncomfortable being provided with servants for everything and often turned the tables and helped them!

He loved motorbikes, his arrival to the church service led by Rev. Richard Bubbers, was in the sidecar of a motorcycle, being flanked by 3 other motorcyclists. Classic bikes were a passion, he built one in his own bedroom during his married life.

Another hobby was handguns and rifle shooting. He was captain of The Solihull Rifle and Pistol Club for 25 years. He became an expert in pistol shooting when handguns were banned after the Dunblane incident.

He was a very positive man, a trait which continued throughout his illness. He was intelligent and had a unique sense of humour.

The hymns sung were *'All Things Bright and Beautiful'* and *'Jerusalem'*, following the funeral he was buried in the churchyard, joining Anita, his beloved wife.

Parish Prayers

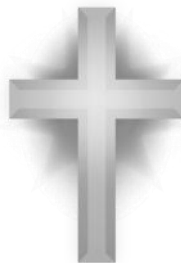
Prayers will be said in January at St Laurence Church for the residents of the following roads:

6 January - Warbank Close

13 January - Weatheroak Hill

20 January - Willow Brook Road

27 January - Witherbed Close



An unusual kindness

Letter from The Archdeacon of Worcester

This month sees the week of prayer for Christian Unity, taking place from 18 to 25 January, an annual initiative in which churches throughout the world are asked to pray for one another as a way of growing closer. Each year takes a different theme on which to hang these prayers and this year it is from the Acts of the Apostles (28,2): *'they showed an unusual kindness.'*

It is the story of Paul's ship, in which he is being held prisoner, being wrecked off the island of Malta. A bedraggled Paul and his companions are washed up on shore, where we hear that the locals show an *'unusual kindness'* to him and his companions. To this day the Church of Malta celebrates this event as the arrival of the Christian faith on their island. Through this kindness, divided people are drawn together, strangers become friends.

I'm taken by the phrase *'unusual kindness.'* It is not that kindness is unusual: there's plenty of it about. But more that this sort of kindness is extraordinary - kindness to strangers, and bedraggled ones at that. How contemporary this story is as we hear about refugees today trying to reach safer countries in unsafe little boats across the Mediterranean, as unpredictable a sea today as it was in Paul's time.

Hospitality is being shown to those who are different. It is relatively easy to love those whom we know and like. It is much harder to love those we either don't know or actually don't like, and I guess I've got a way to go in that area of my discipleship. But Jesus calls us to this unusual kindness. He

tells us to love even our enemies, and Holy Scripture makes a big deal out of loving the stranger.

Where do we learn this extraordinary love? By recalling the occasions when it has happened to us and when people have shown us unusual kindness. We know we grow by being loved into life. Christian unity is an aspiration for all churches, becoming one so that the world may believe. In fact, Christian unity is already a reality, not expressed so much in schemes for unity, but rather in myriad acts of unusual kindness shown by those working in the food banks, patrolling our towns as street pastors, or making space in their homes for refugee families.

Showing hospitality, especially to strangers, preaches the gospel more clearly than our documents or strategies. I rather think it is unusual kindness which makes the difference.



Robert Jones



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10 years of the Authorised Lay Ministry course



The ALM course is celebrating its 10th birthday in 2020!

Since the launch of the Authorised Lay Ministry (ALM) scheme in the Diocese in 2010, hundreds of people have trained as Worship Leaders, Pastoral Workers, Children and Youth Workers, Evangelists, Administrators, Community Workers and Music Ministers.

ALM ministry has become a significant feature of our diocesan life, celebrating the many gifts of our church communities. We believe that a shared ministry of ordained and lay people is essential in a healthy Church. Ordained clergy, Readers and Authorised Lay Ministers all work together to support the shared witness and service of all who are called into Christ's fellowship.

Many people want to offer their time and talents in particular ways, and our ALM scheme offers a short but focussed Diocesan training course, to equip them for specific roles in their parishes.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the ALM scheme. Do you think there is someone in your parish who might be called to serve in one of these ALM ministries? Might it be you who God is asking to take this step?

The next course starting in September 2020 marks the tenth anniversary of the ALM scheme. Do you know someone in your parish who you think might be called to serve in one of these ALM ministries? Might it be you who God is asking to take this step?

Find out more about the ALM scheme on our website:

www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/mission-and-ministry/your-christian-calling/authorised-lay-ministry/

Youth Group at Alvechurch Baptist Church

The new Youth Group at the Baptist Church meets twice a month on Thursdays from 6.30pm until 8.00pm. It caters for 13 years upwards. It's a great opportunity to play ping pong, board games, Xbox games, watch football on the big screens or chat and make new friends.

Subs are 50p with the opportunity to buy from the tuck table.

If you are a teenager who would enjoy the company of a lively group do please come along.

We will be getting together on January 16th and 30th, February 13th and 27th, March 5th and 19th.

For more information please contact Paul or Val Birch on 4455437.

Flowers for JANUARY

	5th January	12th January	19th January	26th January
Sanctuary		Lynda Wolstencroft		
Lady Chapel		Lynda Wolstencroft		
In memory of		Her father Ken Broadway		

Ann Thurrell
0121 447 7668
annthurrell@hotmail.co.uk

From The Registers



Baptisms

We welcome you into the Lord's family

24 November

Cora Grace Taverner

24 November

Jacob Ian Lejeurne

Who's who

Rector	Revd Richard Bubbers, Rector, School Lane, 445 1087 stlaurencealvechurch@yahoo.co.uk
Licensed Lay Ministers	Mr Dick Russell, 2 Gothic Cottages, Radford Rd, 445 3083 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 Mrs Annette Thomas, 8 Snake Lane, 445 5180
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
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 thearkalvechurch@yahoo.co.uk

PCC Special Responsibilities

Finance and Standing Committee

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

Buildings, Fabric and Churchyard for Mission Committee

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

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 JANUARY



Sunday 5	2.30pm	Alvechurch Village Society Walk: <i>'Around Forhill from the Peacock Inn'</i> , led by Gerard & Yvonne Nash starting at the Peacock Inn car park
Thursday 9	9.30am 12.15pm 7.30pm	Ark Tots and Toddlers: Sarah Linton Ark Cafe: Cottage Pie Rowney Green Horticultural Society: Speaker Phil Aubury: <i>'Garden Ponds and Water Features'</i> : Rowney Green Village Hall
Sunday 12	6 to 8.00pm	Alpha Youth Course for young people: The Ark <i>See Richard Bubbers for details</i>
Monday 13	7.30pm	Alvechurch WI: Bhangra dancing with Vijay: Alvechurch Village Hall
Tuesday 14		February GRAPEVINE GOES TO PRESS <i>articles to - thearkalvechurch@yahoo.co.uk</i>
Thursday 16	9.30am 12.15pm	Ark Tots and Toddlers: Sarah Linton Ark Cafe: Somerset Chicken
Sunday 19	6 to 8.00pm	Alpha Youth Course for young people: The Ark <i>See Richard Bubbers for details</i>
Thursday 23	9.30am 10.45am 12.15pm	Ark Tots and Toddlers: Sarah Linton Tiny Tots Service in church: Sarah Linton Ark Cafe: Roast Lamb
Sunday 26	6 to 8.00pm	Alpha Youth Course for young people: The Ark <i>See Richard Bubbers for details</i>
Thursday 30	9.30am 12.15pm	Ark Tots and Toddlers: Sarah Linton Ark Cafe: Glazed Gammon and Parsley Sauce