

The Grapevine

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ST LAURENCE CHURCH ALVECHURCH



SEPTEMBER 2020

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

St Laurence Church Alvechurch

All our usual services, activities and groups remain suspended because of the pandemic, except for the limited services as explained on page 5.

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 5 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)

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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Martin Allen writes...

Man removes all Covid 19 from the world!

Normality restored!!

It would be a great headline wouldn't it? Covid 19 has permeated through all our society and shows little sign of going away. Some people infected have persistent ill health whilst others have no symptoms. Medically we are still finding new problems from the infection.

We long for normality to be restored but may be left fearful, having to tiptoe into a new reality, familiar in some ways, yet not in others.

In recent weeks I have heard more people saying, "I wish this Covid would just go away!", or "I'm getting fed up of this." I wonder what would life be like if we could get rid of it in one fell swoop?

I wonder what we would think if there was a person who volunteered to absorb all the Covid in the world and get rid of it?

Could there be a self-sacrificing, uninfected person to absorb it all? Who would be able to volunteer to do that? What if all the fatigue caused could be wiped away and tired bodies restored? Could a person take the Covid from people's lungs so they could breathe the air now free of pollution? What would we say if that person could take the bad effects on people's mental health and reset emotions to normal? How would we thank the person who took away all the effects on jobs, businesses, offices, and restore the economy? I suspect society would either brand the person a charlatan or label them mad.

If it were possible though, wouldn't we be amazed, grateful and want to heap praise and thanks on them? Wouldn't we commemorate them with memorials, statues, and anniversary celebrations? We'd tell our children

about them, and our children's children and our children's children's children I'm sure! We'd rejoice to see people regaining health and able to enjoy activities with family and friends again. Imagine the rainbow pictures children would draw for that person and the clap they would get on a Thursday night!



Well you don't have to imagine - I know the man who has taken away my equivalent of Covid 19. His name is Jesus and he volunteered to take all my infection with sin and its consequences away. He was uninfected by it, but took it on himself, becoming its host. Finally, he surrendered to its effects but was not overcome by it. After three days he rose again. The rest, as they say, is history. As with my man removing Covid, some believe in and praise Him, others do not. The good news is that we do not need a test to know if we are infected because we all are - there is no herd immunity from sin. A vaccine will not help us - asking for help is all we need do and he will be there to help. Do ask him for help today....

From an idea by Stephen Mcalpine -
(<https://thirdspace.org.au/>)

Image Rev Caroline Beckett @RevCBeckett

(things which harm or prevent me living well and fulfilling my potential)

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Spiritual Resources during Covid-19

Whilst our church has been closed for public worship (see page 5 regarding services in September), 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/2020/03/21/online-church-services-across-diocese/

Daily chants from Taize may be found at - www.churchtimes.co.uk/coronavirus-resources

Update on the lockdown



From Sunday 6 September we are planning the following limited services in church subject to the safety requirements:

1. **9.30am** - on 1st Sunday family communion service, and on 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays family worship service.
2. **11.15am** - on 1st Sunday morning prayer (common worship), and on 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays communion service (common worship).

Safety restrictions include, amongst other things, our not being able to sing together. Two metre distancing means we cannot safely fit in more than 31 people per service in the marked seats, but of course members of the same household 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. We will also need to ask at each service for contact details for the government's "test and trace" scheme. More details will be available on the homepage of our church website – www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org

We are planning to continue to produce our weekly recorded services online, when we start up limited services in our church building, particularly for those who are not able to attend church at the moment. You will find the link to our YouTube channel on the homepage of our website – www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org

Please pray for wisdom and patience during this phase of coming out of lockdown, as we start up of our services again in the best way for the wellbeing of all concerned.

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**Join us for more Open Conversations in September,
Detail from and organised by the Diocese of Worcester**

At the start of the year we held the first round of our 'Open Conversations'. A fantastic 95% of parishes were represented at them and we are hugely grateful to all those who took part. We are planning a further set of conversations in September and we hope they will be just as well attended.

Since those first conversations, the pandemic has changed the world in ways that would have been inconceivable six months ago. That makes these new conversations all the more important as we seek together to discern God's will for the future in challenging times.

Conversation is an essential part of the Christian life. It's no accident that the word 'conversion' is related to the word 'conversation'. To converse is to be connected. The conversation continues as we continually turn towards the person with whom we're speaking. The word conversion literally means 'to keep turning' to God in conversation.

God comes to us individually and corporately. As we turn to one another in conversation to share our insights, we turn to God for conversion. Only together can we discern his will for us.

Jesus came to proclaim the Kingdom of God and in this diocese we are clear that we are called to be Kingdom People of love, compassion, justice and freedom. And to grow as Kingdom People, we need to have churches across the Diocese which are healthy and sustainable.

These conversations will enable us to explore what a healthy and sustainable church might look like in our own context – regardless of the size of our congregation or whether our church is urban, rural or something in between. This is a chance to reflect on what our future might hold as we seek to worship God, make new disciples, share hope and transform our communities.

The meetings will be held online using Zoom, but will follow a similar format to the previous open conversations, with opportunities for people to contribute in small groups. There will also be other opportunities to engage for those unable to use Zoom – you can find out more at -

www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/open-conversations

Please do take part if you can. May we converse well and, as we do so, be continually converted!

See page 12 for more details.

Alvechurch WI

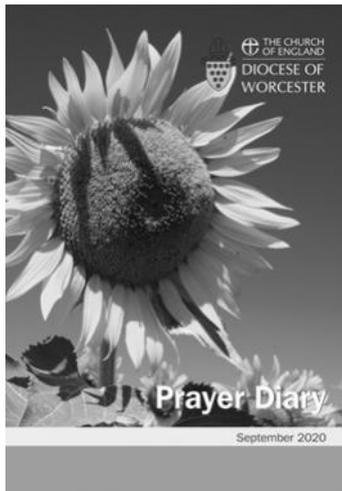
Pam Horsfield writes...

This month most of our members received the Worcestershire Federation of WI's newsletter by email and those who couldn't were taken a printed copy. We also had an email from Julie which updated us with news of members and which gave us simple instructions on how to get into Zoom.

A third of our members are now using Zoom and so we had a good selection of poems and jokes read out on our August Natter Night.

Our next meeting will be on Monday September 13th.

Prayer diary for September 2020



The September edition of the Prayer diary runs from 30th August to 26th September 2020.

To download it, please visit - www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/content/pages/documents/1596727671.pdf

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The Ark Cafe has closed

Michael Davenport writes...

As probably some of you are aware, we have decided to close the Ark Cafe. We have been considering over the last few months how we would operate in the Ark as and when it reopened. We have decided after due consideration that it would not be practical with the social distancing involved and it is not possible to operate in the small kitchen in the preparation of lunches with the number of volunteers required. Also over the past year or more, the number of clients taking lunch has declined.

We started the Cafe in 2005 and we have had a wonderful fifteen years. We have raised a lot of money for the Ark and the Church and have enjoyed a wonderful fellowship with all our clients and volunteers over the years.

We would like to thank all our volunteers past and present over the last fifteen years who have given of their time to make it all such a success. Thanks also go to Ian in the Ark for all his help and latterly to Clayton Fern for the provision of all the meat for our meals.

Finally a big thank you to all our clients who have come to lunch every Thursday so faithfully over the years. We couldn't have done it without you. Thank you all.

Richard Bubbers adds: a big thank you also goes to those who have helped lead the Ark Cafe over the years, particularly Veronica Rogers, Michael Davenport, and Cathy Russell, for all their care and hard work: we are all very grateful.

thank
you!

A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus

Keep us, good Lord,
 under the shadow of your mercy.
 Sustain and support the anxious,
 be with those who care for the sick,
 and lift up all who are brought low;
 that we may find comfort
 knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
 in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.



A prayer for all those facing changes to the way they work

Almighty God, give wisdom to those who have to take hard decisions in the weeks ahead that will affect the lives of others, in government, corporations and in local businesses;
 give hope to those who remain uncertain about their future;
 give resilience to those who are searching for new work; and help your church to find new ways of sharing your love and working for your justice.
Amen

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Finding peace in Covid-19?

a personal reflection from Philippa Brakes

We have all been in awe over the last few months, of the courage of NHS staff tackling the Covid 19 outbreak; going into work, day after day and facing unimaginable scenes of suffering. I just wanted to share an insiders view of life in hospital as a patient, though not with Covid at the height of the pandemic in April. I spent two days on a “cold ward”, supposed to be Covid free and experienced, first hand, the wonderful kindness, patience and humour that seems to permeate hospitals. We patients are a funny lot, cranky, awkward, demented and in pain, yet never once did I detect a scintilla of impatience or unkindness from staff.

The sweet old lady from the other end of the ward who decided to pay me a visit and make my bed for me at 5.00am one morning might have been the Queen herself, such was the gentleness and deference with which she was escorted back to her bed. Then there was the lady with dementia, such a devastatingly confusing and upsetting disease, who had somehow confused Ramadan with Covid such that I was informed that I couldn't possibly go to the bathroom, past her bed as I would cross a clean zone and die with my sins upon me. Picture me, standing clutching my wash bag to my chest, desperate not to offend. This suffering lady's concerns were dealt with by straight faced nurses who spent many hours gently explaining away her fears. Their tolerant gentleness with our vulnerabilities and quirkiness seem to me to reflect that of Jesus with the same eccentric, needy, demanding people he met some two thousand years ago and whose needs he met with loving, healing grace. Today, our hands, our hearts can reach out to oth-

ers as he did and through us, God can bring healing and wholeness to a nation and a world of suffering, desperate humanity.

If we have the humility to reach out and say “*Lord, I need help*” that help will never be withheld because, however irritating, weak and, yes sinful, we are, yet, to God we are worth everything he can give, up to and including the precious life of his son to save us from the messes we create for ourselves. It doesn't matter how much chaos we have created, how much we have failed; we are precious in his eyes, worth the wait, worth redeeming.

In these confusing and frightening times many people are struggling with loss, of loved ones, jobs, regular close contact with family and friends and so much more. We have a God who knows our pain and will never abandon us. His word can bring us hope and drive out our fears which can sometime feel overwhelming.

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Hebrews 11.1

“My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness.” 2 Corinthians 12. 9

“Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed for I am your God. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41.10

If we hang on to these and so many other words of God each day, he will help us to find elusive peace and give us the strength to reach out to others who are suffering and say “*I am here; how can I help?*”

Conversations about the future of our church - round 2



Detail from and organised by the Diocese of Worcester

Following the open conversations held around the Diocese at the start of the year, we are now planning a series of further opportunities to engage with the process as we look at how we can effectively resource a healthy and sustainable Church into the future.

These meetings will be held online using Zoom, but will follow a similar format to the previous open conversations, with opportunities for people to contribute in small groups. To sign up for one of the conversations, please contact the training team with your preferred date on training@cofe-worcester.org.uk or [01905 732812](tel:01905732812), You will be sent the Zoom details ahead of the conversation.

Conversations will take place on the following dates:

- **Tuesday 8 September:** 3 to 5pm **and** from 6 to 8pm
- **Friday 18 September:** 10am to 12 noon
- **Monday 21 September:** 6 to 8pm
- **Tuesday 22 September:** 6 to 8pm
- **Thursday 24 September:** 6 pm to 8pm
- **Monday 28 September:** 2 to 4pm **and** 6 to 8pm:

To sign up for one of the conversations, please contact the training team with your preferred date on training@cofe-worcester.org.uk or [01905 732812](tel:01905732812), You will be sent the Zoom details ahead of the conversation.

What if I don't have access to Zoom – how can I get involved?

Recognising that not everyone will be able to join a video call, we are providing two alternative ways to take part in the Open Conversation process:

1. We are asking those attending to partner up with someone in their church without zoom access and share their experience, if possible, showing some of the video clips which will be available on this web page on their own tablet or phone, and giving a summary of the table time discussions in which they participated. So please do ask around in your congregation and find someone who is willing to do this with you.
2. Join one of **two telephone conference calls**, where a shortened version of the input will be communicated. These will be free to dial into, and accessible to anyone with a phone. **More information will follow shortly on these.**

More information and resources when available can be found at :
www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/open-conversations

Changing our deaneries - a consultation

In July a consultation was launched on a proposal to reduce the number of deaneries from 13 down to six. All are welcome to contribute to this consultation, which will run until **Friday 4 December**.

Reducing the number of deaneries is an important step towards ensuring our diocese is fit for purpose going forward. Our current deaneries are very small and moving to larger groupings will offer more flexibility when considering where ministers are placed as well as provide a broader canvas for mission planning.

It is proposed to move to six deaneries, with each having a mix of urban and rural and a town (or towns) working in partnership with their rural outlying areas.

1. **GREATER DUDLEY DEANERY** uniting Dudley, Kingswinford & Stourbridge Deaneries. We examined establishing two smaller deaneries – Dudley North and Dudley South, but the natural dividing line ended up with too small a Dudley South.
2. **REDDITCH & BROMSGROVE DEANERY** made up of the current Bromsgrove Deanery plus the Wychebrook benefice and the benefice of Elmley Lovett w Hampton Lovett & Elmbridge w Rushock and Hartlebury and Ombersley w Do-verdale currently in Droitwich Deanery.
3. **KIDDERMINSTER & STOURPORT DEANERY** uniting the current Kidderminster and Stourport deaneries.
4. **WORCESTER DEANERY** uniting the Worcester East and Martley & Worcester West Deaneries, plus the Saltway

Team Ministry from Droitwich Deanery.

5. **MALVERN & UPTON DEANERY** uniting the Malvern and Upton deaneries.
6. **PERSHORE & EVESHAM DEANERY** uniting the Pershore and Evesham deaneries plus the Bowbrook benefice from Droitwich Deanery.

As a result of benefices being in different deaneries, the Bowbrook and Wychebrook group ministry will no longer exist. The Deaneries of Greater Dudley and Redditch & Bromsgrove would form the Archdeaconry of Dudley, the other four will be the Archdeaconry of Worcester.

The Church of England suggests that the size of a deanery synod should be between 50 and 150 members. Currently nine of our deaneries are too small, and the biggest deanery synod only has 59 members when full. By moving to six deaneries, synods would have between 70 and 135 members, helping to make them more effective.

Moving to six deaneries in this way also largely unites existing deaneries to ease the change process, with only the current Droitwich deanery being pragmatically divided into different new deaneries. Going to a larger or smaller number would lead to more disruptive change. All parishes will continue to have representation on deanery synod and larger deaneries would not be disadvantaged at Diocesan Synod as the number of places available to a deanery is linked to the size of that deanery (number of clergy, total of electoral rolls).

To respond to this consultation, please email:

john.preston@cofe-worcester.org.uk

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:

7th – Gravel Pit Lane

14th – Heron Close

21st – Hinton Avenue

28th – Hollington Road



The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has launched a free national phone line as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes while church buildings are closed because of the coronavirus. Please pass this information on to those who can't access the internet, and would like to hear some hymns, reflections and prayers.

From The Registers



Funerals and Cremations

May they rest in the peace of Christ

22 July

Denise Ruck

Who's who

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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 admin@thearkalvechurch.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	

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 SEPTEMBER



Unfortunately all events are cancelled until further notice apart from the limited services explained on page 5

Monday 14 September October **GRAPEVINE GOES TO PRESS: articles to - admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk (please note the new email address)**

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.

Just scan this QR code with your mobile phone to make a donation

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 this QR code with your mobile phone



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