



The Grapevine

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ST LAURENCE CHURCH ALVECHURCH

January 2014

Online at www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org

St Laurence Church Alvechurch

SUNDAY SERVICES

8.00.am Holy Communion

9.30.am Family Service

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

11.00.am Parish Eucharist

6.00.pm Evensong

At Rowney Green Shared Church

9.30.am Methodist/Anglican Service

with Holy Communion on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month

DAILY SERVICE

9.00.am Monday to Friday

In St Laurence Church

ORGANISATIONS

Sunday Club	Sundays at 9.30.am in the church and Ark (445 1854)
Choir	Thursdays at 7.45.pm in Church (445 3569)
Bellringers	Sundays at 10.30.am and 5.30.pm Tuesday Practice at 7.30.pm (01527 64077)
Women's Fellowship	4th Wednesday of the month at 2.00.pm in Tanyard Lane Community Centre (445 2125)
Mum's the Word	Thursdays at 9.30.am in The Ark (07773509390)
Ark Café	Thursdays during term time at 12.15.pm (447 7017)
Home Group	Thursday, 7.30.pm at the Coach House (445 2547)
Messy Church	Quarterly on a Saturday in The Ark (445 1985)

THE ARK

Enquiries to Ian Price 0121 447 7955

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Martin Allen Writes...

Firstly from everyone at St Laurence a Happy and peaceful New Year! I hope you had time to relax over Christmas, spend time with family or friends and, as Sue Phillips said in December, found *"amazement at the wonder of our Saviour's birth"*.

New Year is a time to think about changes both good and bad. I hope, as you look backwards, there are things to give thanks for. At St Laurence these have included the completion of restoration works of the Bells, more children being in church and the enrichment of our worship with our links to Peru. I pray any sad things of the year will fade quickly.

A major change has been the retirement of our Rector David Martin which made us appreciate even more all he did. Mercifully the change has unearthed a willingness to "make things work" and we're indebted to all those ensuring that "normal service" continues. As an introductory document for a replacement Rector we have written a "Parish Profile". This makes interesting reading and shows just how many blessings we enjoy living and worshipping here together. This is available at the back of church, in the library, and on line at <http://www.alvechurch-stlaurence.org/>

So what is the hope for 2014?

Well it marks the anniversary of the 1914-1918 War starting which I have mixed feelings about. I'm sure we will see a lot of media attention on the issues the war raised. It all

seems so long ago and different to modern warfare, with terrorism and drones targeting the guilty but harming the innocent. My grandfather would have been horrified that the peace he fought to win could be so easily broken on the cities' streets by people claiming to serve a deity or political party.

To counter the gloom I hope some of the media attention will be centred on the "HOPE" campaign. Begun in 2006, this now annual initiative has linked churches and communities together across denominations. It helps people think about "fresh HOPE" at the start of a new year and brings the BIG HOPE of Easter to people's attention. Volunteers bring HOPE to people on the streets whilst helping people explore faith in HOPE courses. It celebrates the wonderful HOPE we find in Jesus' birth at Christmas too! In 2014 they have a focus on remembering 1914 through a campaign "Greater love". Events are being planned for 4/8/14 the 100th anniversary of war outbreak and I look forward to their creative ideas.

The title is from John 15:13:-

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends".

My prayer for 2014 is that our young people will not need to lay their lives down for their friends. I pray they may know the true HOPE in their lives that our Saviour Jesus, the inspiration for the verse, brings.

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Rowney Green Horticultural Society

Andrea Halse writes...

The Rowney Green Horticultural Society meets at the
village hall on the second Thursday of the month starting at
7.45pm.

Following a year packed with garden interest, Phil Aubrey,
an old friend of ours, will give a talk entitled, *The Answer
Lies In the Soil*, on Thursday 9th January starting at our
usual time 7.45pm.

Non members are very welcome. More details
from Janet on 01527 69399.

Alvechurch Historical Society

At our December meeting Mr Ray Sturdy told us about
Isambard Brunel who was born in 1806 at Portsea; son of a
great French Engineer Marc and an English mother.

Historians claim that he was a genius born before his
time. By his teens he was helping his father in calculations
and equations and together they overcame great obstacles
to build the first tunnel under the River Thames. He went
on to build many great landmarks that are still in good
working order today: The Bristol Suspension Bridge, The
Saltash Suspension Bridge, Crystal Palace, Great Western
Railway to name a few and also steam trains, and the SS
Great Britain, a ship using sails and steam which cut the
time to cross the Atlantic by half. He died in 1859 aged
53. The hull of the SS Great Britain was brought home to
Bristol from the Falkland Islands in the 1970's and restored
to its former glory and is now a tourist attraction in Bristol
Docks. A great man.

We do not have a meeting in January and our Annual
General Meeting will be on Monday 3 February 2014.

I hope you had a good Christmas and a HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO YOU ALL! Margaret Gardner(445 1649).

St Laurence Women's Fellowship

Jill Woolley writes...

We wish everyone a very Happy New Year.

Our programme for 2014 begins on January 22nd when our speaker will be Nicholas Clark - his talk is entitled *"Journey to Extremadura"*.

On February 26th Dr Gillian White's talk will be *"The Story of the Teddy Bear"* and on March 26th we welcome back Virginia Davies for another of her unique Flower Demonstrations.

Peter Preece's talk in November about local wildlife had us all enthralled with his beautiful photographs of Birds, Butterflies and Mammals.

Come and join us at the Tanyard Community Centre at 2.00pm on the 4th Wednesday of each month. We look forward to seeing you.

Book Your Event At The Ark

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A LOCAL VENUE FOR YOUR EVENT?

THE ARK is a modern award winning building adjoining the historic St Laurence Church in Alvechurch, Worcestershire.

The ideal venue for Children's Parties, Baptism Parties, Wedding Receptions, Funeral Wakes, Anniversary Celebrations, Exhibitions, Conferences, Training Days, Classes and much more....

To book the Ark or to discuss your event requirements contact:
Ian Price (Parish Administrator & Event Organiser), The Ark, St Laurence Church, School Lane, Alvechurch, B48 7SB
Telephone: 0121 447 7955 (9am - 2pm)
e-mail – thearkalvechurch@yahoo.co.uk
website – www.thearkalvechurch.co.uk



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Misión Anglicana “Santiago Apóstol”

Villa Ecológica – Arequipa - Perú

Approaching his First Christmas in Villa Ecológica, a shanty town on the edge of Arequipa, Alejandro has sent us the following update.

In many ways it has been a difficult year; however some small changes to the fabric of the Santiago Apostol mission chapel have made a big difference. We now have electricity for lighting and have just been able to put glass in some of the windows, which means that the building will no longer be very cold for the evening services.

As we come to the first Sunday of Advent, the start of a new year in the Church calendar, we are looking forward to seeing more people come to our services.

Here are some pictures:



We have a new window



Our community at Santiago Apóstol

On Saturday 30th November Bishop Godfrey came to Arequipa and there was an ordination service for new priests, so now there are some changes. Justo will move from Cabanaconde to Juliaca, and a new young and enthusiastic priest will go to Cabanaconde to lead the mission forward.

Whilst he was with us Bishop Godfrey went to see the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Arequipa and said they had a good meeting which lasted over an hour. They talked with the Chancellor of the Roman Catholic church about the problem of the ownership of the land on which the Santiago Apostol mission has been built, and it seems that the outcome was most encouraging. We expect to know more in the next few months. This is how slowly things move in Arequipa.

Sister Sue, we are always thinking about you and our brothers and sisters at St Laurence, please give our greetings to them all, and may the Lord bless you with a new vicar.

Here in Arequipa we have lots of sunshine, but I expect it's really cold where you are. I think a cup of hot chocolate will help you ward off the cold!

Doris sends much love. May God bless you all.

Sincerely Doris and Alejandro.

Churches Together Skittles Evening

Every year our local Churches Together group organise a social event during Unity Week, to which everyone is invited.

On January 24th 2014 we are holding a Skittles Evening at the Ark, starting at 7.00pm. Come and join in the fun!

Entrance Adults £5. Children £2.50p

Please can you bring with you a plate of food for the "Bring and Share" supper.

Model Railway Exhibition

It seems a long time since the railway exhibition on November 16th. It was a success, though probably not quite so many visitors as in 2012, but a last minute rush partly made up for this. We raised about £470, and there may be a little more to come.

Thanks must be given to all those who helped with setting up, especially Mick Fletcher and Ian Price, who got the doors etc: out of the undercroft early on Friday.

I would be completely lost without the help of our two sons, who know exactly what to do to make the doors etc: safe for use by layouts and traders.

Veronica and her team were as popular as ever and did a wonderful trade in excellent bacon butties and other goodies.

Barbara and Gordon Griffiths did wonders with the vacuum cleaners at the end. My grateful thanks go to them and the others who helped to tidy up.

By the time you read this we will be planning for the next exhibition on July 12th 2014.

David Richmond.

More Dancing At The Ark

"Invitation to Dance" has two brand new adult dance classes for the New Year, starting on Tuesday, 14 January at The Ark: Ballroom & Latin at 7:30pm and Argentine Tango at 8:30pm. Thursday classes also resume from 9 January with Intermediate Ballroom & Latin at 7:30pm and Improvers' Ballroom & Latin at 8:30pm. New members very welcome: £6/person weekly.

The next Saturday Dance Night will be on 11 January (8pm – 10:30pm).

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New Yoga Class at The Ark

A new class starts on Wednesday 8th January at 7pm in The Ark. This class is for beginners, improvers and more advanced students, as your teacher will differentiate, adapting practices and postures to suit individual strengths and weaknesses.

For more details contact Sally on 07903663085 or e-mail classes@MyYogaMind.co.uk

Sally also runs a yoga class at the Ark at 12.45pm on a Wednesday. Website - www.MyYogaMind.co.uk

Ark Café



The Ark Café reopens for business on Thursday lunchtime, 16th January after the Christmas break.

Our menu for January is as follows -

January 16th	Roast Lamb
January 23rd	Somerset Chicken
January 30th	Roast Pork

We remain open each Thursday lunchtime up to and including 10th April except for February 20th when we are closed for the half-term break.

We look forward to seeing you on 16th January and to continued support in 2014.

My Favourite Bible Story

By Philippa Brakes

PSALM 139 – My favourite.

Being a somewhat flighty individual, I sometimes find the beginning of psalm 139 a little scary! I mean according to the psalmist there is no escape from God – “*you are familiar with all my ways*” “*Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?*” Heck! You mean he knows everything about me?!! But then it starts to get rather exciting –

“If I go up to the heavens, you are there: If I make my bed in the depths you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me; your right hand will hold me fast.”

So whatever I do, wherever I go, he is with me; not judging or punishing after all, but protecting and guiding. Good to know he’s there if I really hit the depths too. Most people seem to panic if we suddenly fail to respond “I’m fine thanks” in reply to the usual, casual British greeting; but not God. He doesn’t just want to know, he already knows just how I’m feeling and he doesn’t run away – he listens!

Then comes the really good bit:

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” What, me? Yes me – and you too!

“When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

We are safe because God has known us from before our mothers were aware we existed. He knows every single tiny detail about us and - THIS IS THE GOOD BIT – It doesn’t matter what we have done; what we have been - He still loves us! How amazing is that?

The psalm ends; “*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*”

Whatever we have been and done, God is with us, loving us and, if necessary, helping us to change. Good news I think.



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The Funny Side



Moses' first and last day as a lifeguard.



It reminds me of the man who was sizing up God by asking, "God, how long is a million years to you?" God said, "A million years is like a second." Then the man asked, "How much is a million dollars to you?" God said, "A million dollars is like a penny." The man smiled and said, "Could you spare a penny?" God smiled back and said, "Sure, just wait a second."

Forget-Me-Not Gets Out And About

“Forget-me-Not” is a group for people who have been bereaved or are working through the effect of loss on their lives. We meet every couple of weeks at the ARK, where we share a cuppa and much more. Each session is facilitated by someone from St Laurence pastoral team, but we find we all have something to offer from our own experience, whether it is an enthusiasm for bird watching, a desire to join an art group, take up Pilates, or just to spend time with others who understand something of the private loneliness bereavement brings.

In November one of our members introduced us to bird watching at Upton Warren (Worcestershire Wildlife Trust), in December (see pictures below) we took the train, sampled the German Market and explored the new Birmingham Library.



New members are always welcome, so whether you have lost a loved one, or faced significant life change recently or at some point in the past, and would like to meet with people who are in a similar situation do come and join us.

Dates for 2014 are:

January 6th, 20th,

February 3rd, 17th

March 3rd, 17th.

We usually meet at 2:00pm, in the ARK but it's always advisable to phone first to check whether we plan to be out and about. You can find out more from Sue Phillips 445 3620, Annette Thomas 445 5180 or Philippa Brakes 445 3983.

Sue Phillips



Christmas Thanks

Mick Fletcher Writes...

All at St Laurence's' give thanks to Mr & Mrs Colin Bennett, for donating the Christmas tree, to Tim, Richard, Tom, Gareth and John for their help in erecting the tree.

To Lynda, Maureen and "Joe" for dressing the tree.

More Skiffle in The Lounge

There is yet another of our popular Skiffle afternoons in the Lounge cafe on 10th February 2014 from 2pm to 4pm.

The 6-5 Specials Skiffle band are once again performing some of the great Skiffle music from the 50's& 60's. All through last summer and autumn the Skiffle afternoons have raised over £200 pounds for the Lounge's youth programme. For that we'd like to say a big thank you to all the villagers who came and supported us. Hopefully, we'll see a few more on the 10th February for tea, coffee, cakes and wonderful sandwiches, not to mention the raffle. Hope to see you there and a huge thank you to Sally Meredith for all her hard work.

Popular Pilates At The Ark

Back problems, poor posture, aches and pains, weak core strength?

If you've answered yes to any of the above then come and try out the benefits of Pilates.

Pilates is designed to stretch, strengthen and balance the mind and body. A method of exercise used by athletes, dancers, men and women and for rehabilitation purposes.



Classes are held at the Ark Monday evenings and Friday mornings, spaces are limited so please contact Jenny for further information on:
jennyjanebird@gmail.com or 07968 363529

Obituary

Colin James Davies



Colin was a man of many talents, skills and interests. His sudden death after a heart attack on 30th October was a shock to everyone who knew him. He had recovered from a cancer scare a few years earlier and was rebuilding his life. During the year he enjoyed three holidays, one was at his favourite holiday resort in Malta.

Colin was born in Rubery in 1935 and went to Turves Green School. After leaving school he trained as an apprentice tool maker at Heavy Duty Alloys and later worked for several local companies.

At 21 he was conscripted into the Royal Air Force for his National Service. He enjoyed several hobbies and excelled in water colour painting. He also enjoyed music and attended many classical concerts in the village and beyond. As was evident at his funeral service on 18th November, he had a wide circle of associates from the world of sport. He had at one time been a highly regarded football and tennis coach here in the Midlands.

Those he taught in their early years remained his friends or belonged to his 'extended family'. He was also a member of Bromsgrove Bowling Club.

In the village, where he had many more connections he was known for his acts of kindness and neighbourliness. He would help anyone. An unassuming man he was there whenever anyone needed him.

Colin was an active member of the St. Laurence Church family, having reaffirmed his faith a few years ago at his Confirmation. He attended the evening service every Sunday and was a sidesman. Colin never married. He had planned his own funeral service requesting that it should be a celebration of his life. It included a tribute given by Catherine Cooke, to whom he had taught the skills of tennis.

At the service two hymns were sung: *How great Thou art* and *Thine be the Glory* and the church choir sang *The Nunc Dimittus*.

Colin leaves behind an elder sister Thelma, and six nieces and nephews and their children and three cousins. The Revd. Don Wrapson conducted the funeral service at the church, and the committal was at Redditch Crematorium.



Flowers for January 2014

	5 January	12 January	19 January	26 January
Sanctuary		Lynda Wolstencroft	Betty Davies	
Lady Chapel		Lynda Wolstencroft	Betty Davies	
In memory of		Ken Broadway	Arthur "Fred" Davies	

I am beginning the New Year with thanks for all the help I received in 2013 and wishing everyone a healthy happy 2014.

Although I do have a small group of willing flower arrangers there is always lots of room for more. We all bring something different to our interpretation of flower displays which can be exciting and refreshing.

Our church building is beautiful in itself yet a few flowers can enhance its beauty.

Thank you once again, Ann Thurrell

A Trustee For 30 Years

At the November meeting of the Trustees of The Lewkner Homes Alms Houses, Dianne Court was presented with a Card and a garden voucher by the Chairman Alan Ogden for completing 30 years as a Trustee.

The card contained a copy of the invitation letter signed by The Rev Aitken with a picture on the front of the Alms Houses.



Who's who

Rector	To be confirmed, 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 Phil Burgess, Highlands, School Lane, 447 7468 Mr Graham Clark, The Coach House, School Lane, 445 2547 Ms Gloria Wilson, 11 Bear Hill Drive, 445 1854 Mrs Philippa Brakes, 56 Callow Hill Road, 445 3983 Mrs Lynne Clark, The Coach House, School Lane, 445 2547 Mrs Jayne Burgess, Highlands, School Lane, 447 7468 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 Andy Humphries, Sunnymead, Station Road, 445 5955 Mr David Richmond, The Ferns, Chapel Lane, 445 3569 Mrs Alison Smith, 12 Hollington Road, 447 7293 Mrs Enid Brumsen, 32 Callow Hill Road, 445 0663
PCC Secretary	Mr Graham Clark, The Coach House, School Lane, 445 2547
PCC Treasurer	Mr David Richmond, The Ferns, Chapel Lane, 445 3569
Organist & Choirmaster	Mrs Janet Wright, 28 Callow Hill Road, 445 4335
Electoral Roll Officer	Mr Colin Bennett, 122 Redditch Road, 01527 64077
Tower Captain	Mrs Lynda Wolstencroft, 49 Hinton Avenue, 445 3212
Singing Group	Mrs Kate Grove, 07773509390
Mum's the Word	Mrs Ann Thurrell, Top Barn, Scarfield Hill, 447 7668
Flower Co-ordinator	Mrs Jill Woolley, 111 Birmingham Road, 445 2125
Women's Fellowship	Mr Ian Price, The Ark, School Lane, 447 7955
Ark Booking Secretary) & Grapevine advertising) Grapevine Editor)	thearkalvechurch@yahoo.co.uk

PCC Special Responsibilities

Finance and Standing Committee

Graham Clark	Mick Fletcher
Alison Smith	Bob Dale
Jeremy Roberts	

Children and Youth

Martin Allen	Mick Fletcher
Pat Booth	

Buildings and Fabric

Mick Fletcher	Colin Bennett
David Richmond	Jill Woolley
Janet Wright	

Task Committee

Alison Smith	Jeremy Roberts
Lynne Clark	Sue Phillips
Bob Dale	

Churchyard

Bob Dale	Andy Humphries
Mick Fletcher	

Peru and Missionary

Sue Phillips	Dick Russell
Sue Brotherton	Margaret Haste

Worship

Barbara Scane	Martin Allen
Graham Clark	Enid Brumsen
David Richmond	

Calendar

JANUARY



Sunday 5th	2.30pm	Alvechurch Village Society: Walk: meet at Tanyard Lane car park
Monday 6th	2.00pm	Forget-Me-Not group: The Ark
Thursday 9th	9.30am	Mums The Word: The Ark
	10.15am	Tiny Tots Service: Church
	7.45pm	Rowney Green Horticultural Society: Talk at the Peace Hall: <i>Answer Lies In the Soil</i>
Saturday 11th	8.00pm	Invitation To Dance: Latin & Ballroom Social dance: The Ark
Monday 13th	7.30pm	Ark Angels W.I. : The Ark
Thursday 16th	9.30am	Mums The Word: The Ark
	12.15pm	Ark Café reopens
FEBRUARY GRAPEVINE GOES TO PRESS		
Monday 20th	2.00pm	Forget-Me-Not group: The Ark
Wednesday 22nd	2.00pm	St Laurence Women's Fellowship: Talk at the Tanyard Lane Community Centre: Nicholas Clark <i>"Journey to Extremadura"</i>
Thursday 23rd	9.30am	Mums The Word: The Ark
	12.15pm	Ark Café
Friday 24th	7.00pm	CTARG Skittles Evening: The Ark: Adults £5, children £2.50p. There will be a ' <i>bring and share</i> ' meal.
Thursday 30th	9.30am	Mums The Word: The Ark
	12.15pm	Ark Café