

Hello everyone,

Greetings at the start of Advent – the season of Waiting. The wait for knowing more about what we can/can't do at Christmas is over and we're now able to do more in-depth planning for our Christmas Services. More information next week on when there will be services in church but for **Sundays 6th and 13th December we will stick to Zoom-only for the 9.30am services.** For Sunday School it will be 'Rise and Shine' on You Tube for 6th December but we hope to be back in the Pastoral Centre on 13th and 20th December - but will confirm next Sunday.

But meanwhile; what about the **Advent Wreath**? Well, thanks to Linda Joyce-Wallace we do have one in church and it will feature in our Sunday-zoom worship and Rise and Shine.

And what about **Compline**? We've actually continued Compline every Wednesday evening at 8.30pm since Lent! So do join us on Conference Call for this gentle, reflective service. The phone number is below (it hasn't changed!)

The pre-recorded **Carol Service** is coming together with recording of the music happening in church on Monday – please pray that none of those involved are taken ill or required to self-isolate!

Don't miss LAST POSTING for **'St Laurence Church Christmas Postal Service'** which is Monday 14th December. Please drop your cards for church members through the letter box at Pastoral Centre (do not enter) and we will put them in the packs which we are aiming to deliver later that week. Please write the name and (if you have it) the address of the recipient on the front with your name and phone number on the back in case of queries. Unfortunately, we can not pass on details of people's addresses to individuals.

Following the Churches Together in Northfield meeting I'm delighted to report that the alternative 'Community Christmas' i.e. delivering 'Christmas Goody Bags' on **Christmas Day** to those who would normally come is looking viable. We've gathered 12 volunteers so far here at St Laurence and 60 invitations to receive packs have gone out. Not too late to offer to help (or even pull out now we know what we allowed to do over Christmas) – contact Jennie King, jennieking47@gmail.com 07765 258834.

The **'Exploring Faith'** course will be focussing on 'The Cross' this week. Please pray for Revd Theresa and Rowena as they lead this course and for all the participants.

Fr David asks:

Do you have a flat screen monitor (or TV with an HDMI input) of size 19" to 24"? If so the St Laurence Safe Spaces project would welcome a donation to be used with the 4 raspberry Pi computers that we plan to purchase to provide training in programming. We have budgeted for refurbished monitors but the donation of a monitor would release funds for other purposes. We will also be providing pool, snooker, air hockey, table tennis, football (no heading) cricket and craft activities. Perhaps you might like to be part of this exciting opportunity to engage with secondary school children. Please contact Fr David for more information (07821 151 484)

In the community section below are UPDATED details of a variety of **job opportunities** to help roll out the vaccine programme. Please pass them on to others. Also 2021 is census year and there will be temporary jobs around this. There are also links to some courses, including Floristry!

It's good to hear that people are enjoying colouring the 'mindfulness' bookmarks which were in the latest packs to be delivered. You don't need to have a set of crayons – just a pencil or ball-point will do as you can shade or use spots and stripes to good effect.

We've some lovely photos of 'mountains' for this Sunday's montages to accompany our Advent Hymns.

Next week it is "Pets" – they can be current ones or much loved ones from the past - so send in a pdf or photo - ideally landscape - to peterm435@gmail.com with the topic in the subject line by 4pm on Thursday.

TODAY Advent Vigil Service from Birmingham Cathedral online at 3.30pm on this Sunday 29 November. This service of readings, prayers, and music sung by the Cathedral Choir (Schola Philippi) will be streamed from the cathedral behind closed doors and available via www.birminghamcathedral.com as we mark the start of Advent.

Independent Faith Engagement Review The government is holding a consultation concerning perceptions of the government's engagement with faith organisations. To find out more and to respond, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/independent-faith-engagement-review-call-for-evidence>. The survey closes on 11 December.

Meanwhile, keep safe and warm.

*Blessings
CanJan*

For your Prayers

Those who are ill

Pat Turner, recovering arm surgery. Early indications are that it has gone well.

Vicki Reeves, in a lot of pain.

Those who have died

Joyce Smith (mother of Lorraine Wells) Funeral in church on Thursday 3rd December

John Walker Funeral at Lodge Hill

Anne Culter Funeral in church on Thursday 10th December

Elizabeth Evripidou Funeral in church on Thursday 17th Dec

Stephen Curwen Funeral in church on Friday 18th December

May they rest in peace and rise in Glory.

For this period of lockdown, the Church of England has issued **a call to prayer to the nation** and details of this and some special prayers are available via <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid19-guidance-churches/call-prayer-nation#na>. The resources include a prayer for this week:

Loving God, your Son Jesus Christ came that we might have life and have it abundantly; pour out your blessing upon our nation; where there is illness, bring your healing touch; where there is fear, strengthen us with the knowledge of your presence; where there is uncertainty, build us up in faith; where there is dishonesty, lead us into truth; where there is discord, may we know the harmony of your love; this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. If you need to contact someone regarding a church safeguarding concern (adults or children), please call our Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator, Rowena Nicholls, on 07724 170448. If you have an urgent concern for the safety of yourself or someone else, call 999.

Community News

Coronavirus Testing We now have a local Covid-19 walk-in testing centre in Longbridge opposite Bournville College as well as one at Stirchley and drive-thru near the airport - so don't hesitate to get a test if you have symptoms or are not sure. You do need to make an appointment via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or 119 (lines open from 7am – 11pm)

The **Community Hotline** continues...

0333 772 1931 (10am – 2pm Monday – Saturday)

for help including shopping and picking up medication as well as advice or if you'd just like a friendly phone-call.

Northfield Food Service came into being over half-term to supply meals to families instead of free school dinners. There was more than enough food so it was offered to other people in need in the community. Overall more than 3500 meals were delivered by over 150 volunteer drivers. Amazing! A new weekly hot meal service is now operational **every Thursday** and the meals are delivered. They are available to adults too, especially those who have health needs, are frail or self-isolating. You can make referrals (including self-referrals) for hot meals via phone 07385 920694 or northfieldfoodservice@gmail.com

If you notice any **fly tipping, graffiti or litter** in your area you can request it to be cleared up on <https://www.fixmystreet.com/>

Anxiety, stress and other mental-health needs.....

Mind is offering an increasing amount of help via the telephone 0121 262 3555 (24/7)

They also offer 'Time Online' – new webchat via <https://birminghammind.org/> as well as mindfulness groups online, recovery sessions, walking groups including a men's group.

There is also.... Samaritans: [Call: 116123](tel:116123) Email: jo@samaritans.org or online: <https://www.samaritans.org/>

NON-CLINICAL Covid vaccine work opportunities with University Hospital Trust (QE and others)

The UK Government and its medical and scientific advisors have been clear that the only safe and sustainable way out of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on lives, livelihoods and lifestyles is through a vaccination programme. In readiness, we are therefore seeking people with the appropriate experience to join us, with the common life-saving purpose of recovering our community from this pandemic.

We will need, to name but a few:

- Drivers
- Security
- Administrators
- First-aiders
- Coordinators
- Organisers
- Care workers
- Marshalls
- Logistical movers and handlers.

Venues: Millennium Point, Aston Villa Football Club, Edgbaston Cricket Ground, Birmingham Airport, NEC

How to Apply:

If you are interested in applying please email the inbox, covidvaccineworkforce@uhb.nhs.uk stating the following:

The position(s) you are interested in applying for (max of 3),

2. Full and up-to-date contact numbers

3. Your preferred venue (max of 3)

4. The hours per week you are available and the days that you would be available to work

5. Within your expression of interest you need to provide details of the skills and experience you have that would be applicable to the roles you are applying for. **Example:** 'I have previously been employed as a delivery driver for 6 years, have a clean driving licence and familiar with driving within the West Midlands area'

6. Please can you also provide details of how you found out about the vacancy; (i.e. St Laurence Church passing on information given at Northfield Stakeholders' Meeting)

On receipt of your email, a member of the recruitment team at UHB will contact you to discuss the information you have provided.

If you feel you require support to complete the application process or you have any questions before applying please email, EATeam@birmingham.gov.uk

We need to fill these roles, **and fast**, so please apply asap. Staff from UHB are on hand to talk through this opportunity: we can arrange a telephone or video call to discuss with you for which you would need to do nothing more than drop an email to covidvaccineworkforce@uhb.nhs.uk expressing your interest and a contact telephone number, and also tell us how you heard about this opportunity.

We will be providing full training and induction so commitment is the main essential criteria, and from there we will work with you to identify where your skills and experience can best strengthen our programme of work. We can then discuss with you the pay and conditions. All roles have been risk assessed as low risk roles so you can be assured that you will be enabled to work safely. Work would commence from December 2020.

Free Courses In England

Government is pushing the use of distance learning to counteract the increased rate of individuals forced to work from home & utilising the furlough scheme

Are you bored of watching Netflix?!

Make your lockdown time count by following government recommendations in taking online training onboard during these times of isolation.

<https://freecoursesinengland.co.uk/free-courses-1>

Floristry Course for Beginners at Northfield Adult Education Centre 45 Church Road, Northfield, B31 2LB on Fridays, 10:00 - 12:30 until 18 December

Cost: Full £45 Discount £23, Concessionary £23

To book an initial assessment: Call 0121 464 8272 / 0121 303 4318 Find out more: visit www.learnbaes.ac.uk

Beware of Loan Sharks – and especially so on-line

More and more people are falling prey to unscrupulous lenders on social media.

Worryingly, one in five victims met their lender on social media in the first half of 2020.

Be really careful and if you ‘discover’ a loan shark you can report them via www.stoploansharks.co.uk

Services and meetings for this week

One of the ministers says Morning Prayer alone in church Tuesday-Saturday

| Services and Meetings this week | Links and Meeting IDs |
|--|--|
| <p>Sunday 8.30am Rise and Shine</p> <p>9.30am Holy Communion By zoom and zoom-phone and available later on YouTube</p> <p>3.30pm Advent Vigil Service</p> | <p>on YouTube from 8.30am</p> <p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84533030134 Meeting ID: 845 3303 0134</p> <p>www.birminghamcathedral.com</p> |
| <p>Monday 5pm Evening Prayer</p> <p>8pm Exploring Faith</p> | <p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89992167638 Meeting ID 89992167638</p> <p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88529776750 Meeting ID: 885 2977 6750</p> |
| <p>Tuesday 10am Gridiron ‘Coffee’</p> <p>5pm Evening Prayer</p> | <p>Contact Stuart & Chris Andrew 0121 628 0425</p> <p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89992167638 Meeting ID 89992167638</p> |
| <p>Wednesday 10am Holy Communion</p> <p>8.30pm Compline</p> | <p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81798933169 Meeting ID 81798933169</p> <p>Conference Call only</p> |
| <p>Thursday 5pm Evening Prayer</p> <p>7pm PCC Meeting tbc</p> | <p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89992167638 Meeting ID 89992167638</p> <p>Link to be circulated</p> |
| <p>Saturday 10am – 11.30am Private prayer</p> | <p>In church</p> |

