



Hello

I'm writing this in the September heat and very glad to see some sunshine following a very grey and challenging August.

Building works in church have been very much 'stop-go;' the emergency repairs to the North Aisle ceiling took nearly 3 weeks rather than the 3 days planned. This was due to the lime putty not arriving as promised and more work needing to be done – but it was finished 10 minutes before the rehearsal for the wedding the next day! The date of arrival of the glass for the porch has slipped and a revised date not forthcoming. However, as we can now use the main entrance and have the North Aisle back in use we are **restarting the Wednesday 10am Communion service in church. You do NOT need to book for this service nor for the 9.30am Sunday Service.** Booking still applies for Sunday School.

Please continue to wear face coverings, bring sanitiser and take Lateral Flow Tests – we have plenty of kits in church. We have started to re-introduce a little singing but not on 12th September as our organist is away. Hopefully, we will return to having services at 8.30am and 10am but not just yet.

Whilst Peter and I have managed to take a couple of short breaks earlier in the year and some holiday at home I have got a lot of annual leave outstanding so we are going up to Newcastle this Saturday evening for a couple of days and to cheer our youngest in doing the Great North Run in aid of 'Crisis.' Towards the end of the month I'm taking a 5 day retreat on Holy Island followed by some annual leave. I will be off duty from 27th Sept – 10th October. Revd Theresa and Janice will be around most of the time but Theresa's husband has broken his hip and will require extra care once he is home.

We are delighted to welcome Sarah Vernon to the 'tech team' which means it is no longer just the ministry team running it. However, without a second person to handle the zoom end, we regret that **there will NOT be Zoom coverage for the following Sunday services: 12th September, 3rd October and 10th October.** We may be able to offer a short service on YouTube but we can't promise.... The sound system in church is nearly 20 years old and we are getting a lot of feedback due to a fault on the amplifier. To reduce this we've had to turn the volume down but this has made audibility, especially on Zoom, difficult. We apologise for this and are exploring how to improve this but it all takes time and money.

We had a lovely BBQ for St Laurence Day, which raised £124. We have an outdoor bric-a-brac sale this coming Saturday (11th Sept) from 9am – noon. At the 11th hour we have managed to pull together a good selection of activities for Heritage Week and beyond – see *the enclosed flyers about Northfield Revealed and 'The Arch.'* We are ticketing the Heritage Service with the Bishop of Birmingham, and the 'Country Diary in Song' so we don't have too many people in church thus reducing the risk of Covid transmission. Please do make every effort to support these as they will be great eventsand if you haven't heard Stuart Andrew talk about the church do come along; you don't need to book for that one!

Thank you to all those who have returned their Green Hearts from the previous pack. What started as a bare tree is now beginning to flourish with our hearts and commitments to reducing our carbon footprints. They will be presented to Gary Sambrook MP at an ecumenical meeting on Friday 1st October (postponed from early September) so not too late to return any outstanding. The Revd Phelim O'Hare (it is pronounced Fail-im!) is being **licensed as our Area Dean** on Monday 13th September at St John's Longbridge. Please pray for him and his family as they settle into Birmingham.

If you have a **Children's Society Box** please do NOT return it to church just yet. We are hoping to have a drop-in session on Thursday 11th November from 9.30am – 2pm in the Pastoral Centre for the return of boxes – have a coffee whilst your box is counted. If you can't drop-in that day please return your box before the day but as close as possible to it as we have limited secure storage for the boxes.

We were sorry to learn of the death of **Barbara Ward** on 29th August 2021

Her funeral will be on Tuesday 14th September at Lodge Hill but she will be brought into church the evening before where prayers will be said at 7pm and she will lie in church overnight. Members of the congregation are invited to attend the prayers in church and/or the funeral service. No pre-booking needed.

Barbara Finch sends her greetings and best wishes. She has been in hospital a few times recently due to her mobility issues.

The world continues to have a lot of troubles especially in Afghanistan and those living with the devastation caused by Covid and facing extreme weather events. St Laurence congregation has always responded with great generosity to support our sisters and brothers in need. Our **Harvest Service** is on 3rd October and we invite you to donate tinned, dried and canned goods for local foodbanks and cash/cheques/bank transfers to support our link Dioceses in Malawi. Please write 'Malawi' on the back of cheques and use 'Malawi' as the reference for Bank transfers. A/c: St Laurence PCC, Sort-code 40-52-40, Number 00095606

As we bless others may God continue to bless us.

Yours in Christ,

Canon Janet

7th September 2021