



**St. Alphege Church
This Week's News
29th November 2020
Advent Sunday**



**President Revd Sue Chandler
Preacher Stephen Linstead**

COLLECT

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Almighty God, as your kingdom dawns, turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness, that we may be ready to meet you in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

O Lord our God, make us watchful and keep us faithful as we await the coming of your Son our Lord; that, when he shall appear, he may not find us sleeping in sin but active in his service and joyful in his praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THIS WEEK PRAY FOR

Monday	The people of Scotland
Tuesday	Those who are lonely
Wednesday	The work of physicians and medical
Thursday	Those who teach the faith
Friday	Members of religious orders
Saturday	Shop workers

NEXT SUNDAY

Readings: Isaiah 40. 1-11, 2 Peter 3. 8-15a, Mark 1. 1-8
President & Preacher: Revd Sue Chandler

PRAY FOR THOSE RECENTLY IN NEED (St Alphege)

Rashi Somal, Margaret Evans, Jean Williams, Joy, Ruth, Margaret & Colin James, Valerie Powell, Irene Williams, Ann Roberts, Derek Owen, Priscilla White, Lucy, Michele, Alan, Megha, David Boyes, Evelyn Berry, Lee-Anne Wilson, Shirley Vincent, Anna Mary Thomas, Helen L, Anne Kemp.

CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR

Henry Balthazor, Stephen Foster, Jenny Williams, Jonathan Mark, Stephen John,, Debbie White, George Hutchinson, Barbara Abbott, Sheila Pittaway, Helen Greenham, Jane Kenchington.

PRAY FOR THOSE RECENTLY IN NEED (St Michael)

Carol & Stuart; Paul Binfield; Eileen Dowe; Irene Tunnicliffe; Julie; Donna; Geoffrey Pearson; Pat Bass; Anthony Vanes; Jane; Helen; Carolyn; Nigel; Angeline; Maria.

PRAY FOR THOSE RECENTLY DEPARTED

Gloria Florance, Jeremy Rose.

BIBLE READINGS Isaiah 64. 1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence— as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity for ever. Now consider, we are all your people.

NEW TESTAMENT 1 Corinthians 1.3-9

My brothers and sisters: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

GOSPEL Mark 13. 24-37

In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in clouds” with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.’ But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.’

All churches - Latest information available at: <https://www.solihullparish.org.uk>

We continue to keep Jane and all those recovering from illness, both in the UK and around the world, in our prayers. If you would like to send Jane a message, please direct these to her PA Ann Colloby at: -office1@solihullparish.org.uk

Online Services on Sundays - From this week, we will send an email on Sunday mornings with direct links for the Prayer Service and the Eucharist which we hope will help people to be able to join with us in worship together. Do look out for this email – we look forward to worshipping together even though we can't meet in our churches.

This Sunday for the start of Advent there will be three services for you to connect with online, a Prayer Service at 10am, a Eucharistic Service at 11.15am and a pre-recorded Advent Carol Service for Choral Evensong at 6.30pm.

From Sunday 6 December 10.30am Worship at St Alphege Church will resume, booking will be required and numbers restricted. To book contact the Parish Office on 0121 705 5350, or office@solihullparish.org.uk. For people who are participating from home a Service will be available on Facebook and YouTube, as will Choral Evensong. There will be links on the home page of the parish website for you to watch later if you wish. Please be aware, the Prayer Service that has run throughout November for the dedicated month of prayer will now come to a close.

St Helens From Sunday 6 December two services of the Holy Eucharist will be resumed at St Helens, these will take place at 9.30am and 11am. Booking is essential and numbers restricted. To book call Beryl Moppett on 705 0377, or online at: <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/eventlist/sthelenseucharist>

****Prior Notice**** Please be aware that St Alphege Church will be closed for Private Individual Prayer on Thursday 10 December.

The Junction meets every Sunday morning over Zoom at 9.15am with the usual mix of songs, bible stories, prayers and activities. **Families who would like to attend need to register with Linda in advance via e mail L.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk to receive the Zoom link.**

This Sunday, 29 November 2020, a Reflective Service for Advent will take place over Zoom at 3pm with readings, music and prayer, all are welcome. For more information or to receive the Zoom link please contact Beryl Moppett at: -beryl.moppett@gmail.com

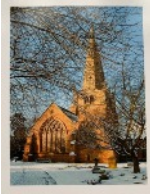
A call to prayer for the nation We have been asked to treat this month of lockdown as an occasion when we commit ourselves to pray for our nation. The suggestion is that we aim to commit to pray at 6pm each day. Archbishop Welby recently said: "Prayer is my first response when I feel out of my depth, when I need help, when I am worried, when I am concerned for those I love. It is a gift that God gives to all, whether you are a regular pray-er or not; bring your cares and the cares of the nation to God. For God loves and hears and holds."

For more information and resources go to: - <https://www.churchofengland.org>

Weekly Dwell Service - Fr Simon is offering a new online reflective service which will be live streamed on our Facebook page at 10am every Wednesday from St Michael's Chapel. The link will be made available later on our homepage. Please be aware that St Michael's Chapel will not be open on a Wednesday for Private Individual Prayer.

Solihull Parish will be producing their own Advent Calendar this year. Every morning in December virtual doors will open online revealing acts of worship from across the Parish reflecting the anticipation and hope for the future we feel in this season, a sense of hope which is needed even more than usual after the events of 2020. 60 second clips of music, readings, poems etc... are required and if anyone would like to be involved then please contact joecooper1@hotmail.co.uk

Bookstall - Parish Christmas Cards. In view of the current situation and COVID restrictions, we have not commissioned a new Parish Christmas card this year. However, we do have a limited stock of cards from earlier years available in two different designs - packs of 10 for £3 per pack. Please contact Fran Halstead (fran.halstead@gmail.com or 0121-705-0175) for further details.



800 Year Cookbook - The Cookbook will not be published this year due to marketing problems during the Coronavirus pandemic. We'll keep you informed of any future developments. Philip & Sue Leach.

Just Explore - a course on Thursday Evenings to **explore the key aspects of the Christian Faith.** Many have benefitted from this course which is good for those who are exploring Christianity, for those who would like to refresh their faith, and for those who are considering Confirmation. Lots of opportunity to discuss and raise questions. This year the course will be on zoom and starts on Thursday 14th January. More details on www.solihullparish.org.uk choose the 'Connect' option on the right side of the home page and then 'Just Explore' or contact Chris Carrington chrisandjennycarrington@googlemail.com

Food Bank - The food bank is based at the Christian Renewal Centre on Lode Lane. Outside the centre there are orange wheelie bins in which you can leave donations. We are short of Microwave Rice, Tinned potatoes, Tinned Meat, Sugar, Jam or Marmalade. Cans with ring pulls are especially welcome as some recipients don't have can openers.

Malawi - An update on the dire situation facing the people in Malawi (our link diocese) will be in the December magazine. As a result, they are appealing for support in particular to help schools in Malawi have buckets, soap and sanitiser and to help the pastoral and priestly ministry of the church to continue. If you can help, here's how: - Donations via St Helens can be by cheque payable to St Helens Church, addressed to Geoff Wyatt and left in the 'W' pigeon hole at St Helens. Alternatively, by bank transfer to St Helens District Church Council, Sort Code 309778, Account Number 00361515. Please mark cheques or transfers as 'Malawi' and make donations before Monday 14 December.

If you want to read the article for yourself the link is <https://cofebirmingham.com/news-stories/news-from-malawi-and-a-request.php>

Solihull Council have been in touch again, they are still urgently looking for more foster carers to provide a caring and supportive home to children in the borough. Almost anyone can become a foster carer, whether you are single, married, young or retired, a home owner or in rented accommodation. All you need is a spare bedroom and a willingness to give a child a stable and loving home. Foster carers of all ages, cultures and backgrounds are needed in Solihull to look after children for short and longer periods of time. In return, foster carers receive an extensive support package including training and professional development as well as a generous fostering allowance. For more information, please call 0121 788 4253 or visit www.solihull.gov.uk/fostering. Sign up to our Stay Connected emails to keep up to date with fostering news and events www.solihull.gov.uk/stayconnected.

7 DECEMBER 2020 - ANNUAL CHURCH MEETINGS

The annual church meetings for the Parish are being held on Monday 7 December 2020 starting at 7:30 p.m. This year, due to the covid/coronavirus situation, the PCC has decided that the meetings should be held electronically, so that more people can participate. The business of the meetings will include the appointment/election new Parish Wardens, Parish representatives to the Deanery Synod and up to 5 lay members of the PCC. This means that these are important meetings which will have a bearing on how our churches are run in the period to the next annual meeting.

The meeting will be held by Zoom video conferencing. Many will already be familiar with this facility, as it has been increasingly used for individuals and groups keeping in touch during the lockdown period. Access details for the meetings can be obtained from the Parish Office by emailing office@solihullparish.org.uk or calling 0121 705 5350. A short guide is being prepared for anyone who has not used Zoom before but is able to access the internet.

For anyone without access to a computer or the internet, the Parish Office can send out a set of papers for information. Any comments on these can be passed either to another member of the church who will be attending or passed to the Parish Office who will report these to the Chairman of the meeting. It may be possible to listen to the meeting by telephone (although not to speak or vote) and arrangements for this are currently being investigated.

The required notices will be displayed in the usual places by Sunday 29 November, as required, and details will also be included on the Parish Website. Copies of the Agenda, the Meeting Booklet and the financial statements for the year to 31 December 2019 will be published on Churchbuilder but the Parish Office can also send copies on request for members who have not registered to use this resource.

The next annual meetings are still scheduled to take place on Monday 26 April 2021 and, if possible, will be held in the OBH. Needless to say, the date and venue for this will need to be kept under review in the light of developments regarding the ongoing pandemic.

Community Champions News

Fortunately, this week we have started to see the results of the current lockdown. In Solihull, rates of Covid have fallen by 16% in the last 7 days to 269.4 per 100,000 people; however, this was the level just before lockdown and is still above the national average, so there is a long way to go. There has been an encouraging reduction of 20% in cases amongst the 60+ age group, to 188.7 per 100,000 people.

Hospitals are still very busy; staff there need measures to be adhered to so that they can cope with their numbers.

Next week we will go back into a 3-Tier system, but the regulations will be tougher as the previous one did not bring down the R-rate. Which Tier we will be in is being announced later today. There is a concise summary of the new Tiers at: Tier 2:

COVID-19 Tier 2 High Poster (solihull.gov.uk) Tier 3:

COVID-19 Tier 3 Very High Poster (solihull.gov.uk) Christmas Between 23 and 27 December, three households will be allowed to form a temporary "Christmas bubble". They can mix indoors and stay overnight.

Bubbles will be allowed to meet each other:

- In each other's homes
- At a place of worship
- In an outdoor public space, or garden

The bubbles will be fixed, so you will not be able to mix with two households on Christmas Day and two different ones on Boxing Day.

Households in your Christmas bubble can't bubble with anyone else.

There will be no limit to the number of people in a household joining a bubble. People who are self-isolating should not join a Christmas bubble.

These rules only apply between the dates above. Over the New Year holiday there are not expected to be any exceptions to the Tier we are in.

Doctors' Surgeries

This week our news focused on the difficulties of getting through to surgeries. There have been many complaints about Solihull Healthcare Partnership; their representative, Mandy Holmes, explained what they are putting in place to improve things. They are making sure that more phone lines are available, but only have one call centre for 55,000 patients.

The main message is please don't block phone lines if you can access what you need online. Many SHP surgeries now have front door access – if you can't get through on the phone you can go to the surgery doors for help. Don't ring up for a flu vaccine – your surgery will contact you. Don't ring up for a Covid vaccine – these haven't been approved yet so surgeries don't know when they will be available.

Blossomfield Surgery is closed – it is being used jointly with GPS Healthcare as a Covid assessment centre.

It is worth remembering that some of their staff shortage is due to staff being off with stress due to the abuse they have received when answering calls.

Don't forget to let me have any questions about Covid vaccinations by next Wednesday morning. Thank you, Pam Price.