

Knowing and worshipping God and sharing His love



St Nick's, Allestree & St Paul's, Quarndon

December 2020

From the Vicarage

Dear friends,

How to write a Christmas letter in the middle of a lockdown? Well first of all, Christmas will still be celebrated across our churches and local areas, even if it's celebrated differently to what we're used to! It may be that we continue our online services for a little while longer and we will continue to send out resources for worship and prayer via email and for of course by post to those who simply can't access any form of social media. It may be that your plans for Christmas are constantly in flux; how many people may be allowed into homes, how far can you travel, will you be able to get presents delivered in time, will that 8lb turkey you ordered months ago now be too much? You are not alone in dealing with this seasonal conundrum, everyone is going to have to make some difficult decisions and choices in the next few weeks and we must acknowledge that we are still in extra-ordinary times. I've already begun talking to our children for example about expectations, presents might get delayed and there just might not be as many as in previous years due to 'elf' furloughing. It's worth having those conversations in whatever way is suitable for your family members.

There are also going to be many who will struggle to celebrate Christmas because of bereavements. This week, Royal Derby hospital staff kept a time of silence to remember Dr Krishna Subramanian, a 46 year old consultant Anaesthetist who died of

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Rest Day: Friday



coronavirus in November. We must not be in doubt that there are many whose deaths are the result of contracting this virus and therefore we must not be complacent over the next few weeks. If you've experienced a bereavement in recent months please let us know if you'd like us to add the name of your loved one to our specially decorated 'Blue Christmas' tree, in both churches, which will be decorated with blue decorations and golden hearts to represent your loved ones. Please get in touch with a member of clergy or Gael at the church office.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have also reminded us that whilst our Christmas will feel different this year, what has not changed is the story and the meaning of Jesus' birth. 'Emmanuel', literally 'God is with us'. With us in the mess of good, in the disappointment and the difficulty, the sorrow and in celebration. #Comfortandjoy invites us to hear again the message of the angels - God's messengers - good news of God's unfailing love for a world that is weary and hurting.

Perhaps the whole of God's story, can be summed up in the four-word refrain of the angels in the Christmas gospel. It's what the angel says to Zechariah, as he is overwhelmed in God's temple by the presence of God's messenger: do not be afraid. It's what the angel says to Mary, as she contemplates unexpected motherhood and probable disgrace: do not be afraid. It's what the angel says to Joseph, as he looks to avoid social embarrassment and messy relationships: do not be afraid. It's what the angel says to the shepherds, as these outsiders are overcome by being placed at the heart of God's new beginning: do not be afraid.

So if you have an angel, perhaps a picture, a Christmas card, why not place it in your window, just to remind others of God's message to humanity....

May you have a faithful Christmas,
Stay safe,
God bless,
Becky



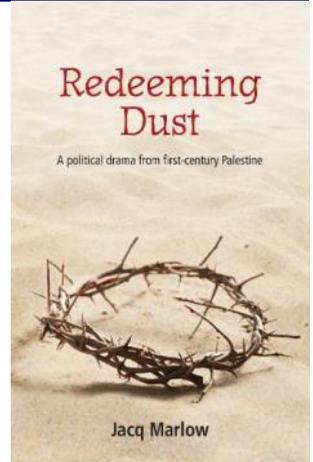
“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”

Luke 2: 10

Book Review, by Phil Moncur:

“REDEEMING DUST” By Jacq Marlow

Billed as “a political drama from first century Palestine”, Redeeming Dust is a novel by a local author, set around the earthly ministry of Jesus and his followers. Told from the point of view of John, the author credibly blends the four gospel accounts into a single narrative. This is no euphoric evangelical apologetic. Both the followers and opponents of Jesus are portrayed sympathetically, and their doubts and uncertainties are by no means hidden away. Marlow takes pains to make effective use of fictional conversations to explain the complex political and religious background to the events portrayed in the gospels. Nevertheless, the true nature and message of Christ gradually emerges, culminating in the joyful triumph of the Resurrection.



For anyone seeking a break from reading the Gospels in daily snippets, this novel provides a genuine opportunity to engage with the greatest story ever told from a different, and in some ways unique, perspective. Ultimately this is a novel, a work of fiction based around the unchanging truth of scripture. Bearing that in mind I can recommend this book as an engaging Advent read or, perhaps, a suitable Christmas gift.

Redeeming Dust is published by Malcolm Down Publishing as is available from both Christian and secular bookshops (ISBN 9719286317) priced at £10.99 at Waterstones and £10.50 from Amazon. A Kindle edition is available at £7.99 (If you want a copy urgently or during lockdown, Kate & I can get you one directly from the author at £q10.99!).



Perhaps you love of reading and have enjoyed using some of this lockdown rediscovering the joy of books?

Please do get in touch with any book reviews and recommendations to share!

We love to hear what you've been reading and how it has affected you.

The Allestree Advent Calendar Trail

Given that Christmas is going to be a bit different this year, we thought we'd like to spread some Christmas cheer across Allestree! The local churches are encouraging people to decorate a window of their house, with a different window being revealed for each day of December.

The theme of the windows is favourite Christmas carols or well-known Christmas songs. You can decorate in whatever way you'd like to, but please bear in mind your window may on view both during daylight and in the evening, so you might like to think about having some fairy lights or some kind of 'back illumination'.

Each new window revealed will be posted on the Allestree Churches Together facebook page and shared with the St Nick's facebook page and the Allestree Matters facebook group.

Each window will be visible from its first designated date until Wednesday 30th December, so that we can encourage folks to walk, jog, roll, scoot or cycle around the Allestree Advent calendar trail for their post-Christmas exercise!

A map of the Allestree Advent Calendar will be available both digital and printed version on request, via St Nick's webpage and Facebook page. If your church administrator would like a copy of the map please get in touch!

On Christmas Day we are hoping that local churches will have their own 'grand revealing' of a decorated window or outdoor display.

If you're hosting a window you might like to assist in raising funds for a favourite charity- you might like to display your charity's name and giving details.

All are welcome to join in decorating windows, if you can't take part, why not put a picture of an angel in your window during Advent to bring comfort and joy at this time of year.

Please get in touch with Becky Mathew, email: vicaral-
lestreequarndon@hotmail.com or phone St Nick's church office on 01332 550431.



Be still: Nature Lockdown Tales, by Jan Calladine

One of the benefits of the first lockdown was learning to be still, to relax and take time out. It was ok to read a book, to go for a walk or just sit in the garden and listen to your own breathing. Many commented on how lucky we were, living on the edge of such lovely countryside, and with uncrowded pavements we could go out each day and take in the beauty of God's creation. Some also discovered footpaths or corners of parks they had driven or walked by in the past but now had time to explore.

Early on I realised that the clear azure skies allowed amazing stargazing at night despite the street lighting. The variety of butterflies that danced around the garden alone or in groups mesmerised me and I would dead-head my sweet peas to a chorus of bees harvesting their fill from the newly opened flowers.

I also took more notice of the birds, attempting to identify them via an old wildlife book after the coup of getting bird food from Wilkos in those early weeks. They would squabble over the birdbath like small children and on a hot day you would see them sunbathing on the edge of the lawn, bodies pressed hard to the ground with their wings splayed out.

My favourite visitors to what I now no longer considered 'my' garden were at dusk. We have always had bats circle the garden in the evening as they forage on their nightly rounds. If we sat still they would come so close you could hear their clicks as they circled, swooped and had dogfights with their siblings. This sky ballet though majestic, marked the overture for the entrance of our final visitors, the hedgehogs.

We have noticed the odd prickly garden visitor in the past but as we spent more time reading in the still of the evenings, their visits got so familiar you could time their appearance. We even got a wildlife camera to try and learn more about them.

Hedgehogs are actually quite noisy – or ours are, especially on a still night with no traffic. They cough, sniff and sneeze, scratch very noisily and love to forage on the dry leaf litter at the back of the borders, all of which allows us to locate them as they are not exactly built for stealth. For a long while we had just one, but in the summer months at 9.30



our garden turned into a hedgehog nightclub as another would turn up, running across the lawn to her beau and then dance nose to nose with him as he snorted the whole time. Both were totally oblivious to us being there and only had eyes for each other. After a month or so she stopped visiting but the latest news is that he again has a little friend, this time a very small round hog and they are both busy collecting leaves to make a nest so we look forward to the possibility of seeing hoglets next year.

Though it has been a difficult year for us all, seeing what was right in front of me has been a joy and a blessing and a reminder that (wild) life goes on and that the lilies of the field are indeed not worried so neither should we be.

Christmas Connection Appeal

As you may know, Since 1996 Derby City Mission has been providing Christmas presents for thousands of children who might not otherwise receive any. As well as supporting families that we are already working with through our Jubilee debt & benefit advice service, we also have children nominated by churches and those working with people from deprived areas and charities such as Upbeat Communities and Safe Families for children. In 2019 over 460 children received a bag of Christmas presents, including two main presents, a book, a Christian tract, cuddly toy and chocolate, kindly donated by local churches, schools, businesses and individuals. This year, because of the effect that Coronavirus has had on the economy, in the last month we have seen a sharp increase in the number of families facing poverty and seeking help with food and debt advice through our Jubilee clinics. At the same time, with churches who have always been a major source of donated gifts not gathering as normal, we are concerned that the number of gifts received may not be enough to meet demand.

This year to try and mitigate against churches not gathering and being able to collect toys, we have created an Amazon wish list so that people can buy toys and send them straight to our offices in Normanton Road, www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/1NB902AOYE7X5?ref_=wl_share

Please do take a look and consider buying something from the list—when ‘checking out’, please select to deliver to the gift registry address, so that the presents are delivered straight to our offices.

Many thanks.



“Love in a Box” - Christmas Shoebox Appeal

It has been quite difficult to organise our annual Shoebox collection this year as the church has been closed most of the time but I am pleased to say that 35 boxes are now on their way through Rotary and Teams4U to needy children in Romania, Moldova and Belarus.



Thank you very much to all of you who took part.

Celia



Christian Aid Week 2020 was certainly a Christian Aid Week we won't forget!

The coronavirus pandemic affected so much of your planned fundraising but you triumphed, you persevered, and you went online. We have been so humbled by the dedication you have shown to supporting Christian Aid - not even a global pandemic could stop you from standing alongside the most vulnerable.

In total you raised nearly 4 million pounds and we could not be more grateful for all your hard work and passion. Thank you.

Congratulations!

Many congratulations to Sarah Tupling, our reader in training who was licensed by the Bishop during a Zoom service on Saturday 7th November. We are so pleased for you!

If anyone is interested in knowing more about training to become a reader—what it means or entails, please Speak to Becky or Dawn and they'll be happy to chat with you. Maybe you've felt a call to ministry in the church and want to explore it more? They would be thrilled to hear all about it!



Premier Praise Doorstep Carols

During the run up to Christmas many of us like to go to a Carol Service or Community Carol Singing event. This year we cannot do that, but that does not have to stop us having a good sing with our neighbours and our community.

On Sunday 20th December at 5:30pm the whole country has the chance to join in Carols on your Doorstep. All you need to do is have a radio at hand. That can be a DAB radio, Freeview on your TV (725) or the Premier Radio phone app. Premier Radio will play 3 or 4 carols for everyone to sing along to. A carol sheet will be posted through your door nearer the time.

This is a good chance to dust off that festive jumper or your most festive headwear if you like! It will be family-friendly so children are welcome to bring something to shake or rattle along too.

At this challenging time for all of us let's try and bring a little joy to our community this Christmas.

More information can be found at www.carolsonthedoortstep.co.uk/



Bishop's 2020 Vision & Strategic Planning

Our vision for the Diocese must be 'Seek first the Kingdom of God', and our daily prayer 'Your kingdom come.'

God's Kingdom is, I believe, Good News for all. It means transformed lives: growing church, building community—and, for that we need generous faith, courageous hope, life-giving love.

My desire for this diocese is that we know we are loved beyond measure by Jesus, and, sure in the hope that gives us, we have the courage to love without restraint for Jesus' sake. That, for me, is the Kingdom of God.

It is an extraordinary grace to be invited to join the Kingdom of God. That means for me salvation, community, justice, hope. I don't deserve it; it is pure grace.

And my prayer is that we yearn to grow the Kingdom of God—for all ages, increasing our diversity, across every geographical, socio-economic, and cultural context (and from all our theological and church traditions and circumstances).

I long that who we are as Kingdom people—courageous, compassionate, creative, committed—is so alive, so attractive, so inspirational, that growth of the Kingdom is

natural. I long that we grow in depth of faith and daily living of discipleship, that we grow participation in worshipping congregations, that we grow in scope and scale of impact in our communities.

It is part of my calling to encourage that, literally to ‘give heart’, so we sustain the hope that gives us courage, not just to carry on, but also to be brave, radical and even risk taking. Because encouragement is about ‘heart’, that also means always being relational, generous, outward looking, and life giving.

We have discerned that God is calling us into new ways of being, as well as new ways of doing, church. We recognise that the scale and scope of the challenge ahead is significant. The transitions needed in culture and delivery of identifies Diocesan priorities, in the timescales now anticipated post-Covid, are considerable.

The strands of immediate work for implementing transition around financial resilience, Diocesan structure, deployment, Diocesan office, and Buildings for Mission are being shaped, and will include wide conversation and exploration following Diocesan Synod in October.

Commitment to innovation and creativity will be necessary , alongside continuing commitment to inherited practice that is faithfully fruitful. Therefore, support through transition, investment in establishing new partnerships and relationships, as well as the re-articulation of continuing models will all need to be in place as people and communities are accompanied through loss, change, opportunity and renewal and revival.

This is a deep work of the Holy Spirit. We will rot our work in prayer, and discern the signs of the Kingdom, that we might join in with God, to ‘proclaim afresh in this generation the good news of Christ’. Our prayer is that not just what we do, but who we are proclaims that good news.

Embodying our values of generous faith, courageous hope, life-giving love must mark us ot as we reshape the work, worship and witness of the Church of England in Derby and Derbyshire—

equipping all the people of God, both laity and clergy, for faithful response to our call: Good News for all—transformed lives, growing church, building community.

*Bishop Libby,
Bishop of Derby*



Sponsored Signed Carols

On Saturday 19th December our reader, Sarah, will be doing a Sponsored Carol Sign to raise funds for St Nick's. This will be 10-12pm and streamed live to our Facebook Page. You can find this by googling 'St Nick's Facebook'. Sarah will be seeing how many songs she can sign during the two hours, and we will be taking requests! Feel free to comment on the live stream with your favourite carol to see it signed beautifully by Sarah.

You can either sponsor via cash in envelope to the office, or if you go to give.net and search for St Nicholas Church Allestree PCC, you can give to us easily and safely online.



THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM: A REFLECTION—Phil Moncur

In the heyday of steam railways, after the last passenger train of the day over the Carlisle to Settle Route, a long procession of heavy goods trains ran, carrying a wide variety of loads over long distances. In the southbound direction the first forty-five miles were uphill, with the gradient steepening severely over the last ten miles up to Ais Gill summit. For over an hour and a half, the fireman would be almost constantly shovelling over two tons of coal into the firebox as well as helping the driver to keep a lookout for the glimmer of oil lamps in the signals through the darkness.

Upon sighting the green light indicating the Distant Signal for Ais Gill, the fireman knew that the hard work would soon be over and that he could sit down, take a rest and, perhaps, enjoy a can of tea as the train rolled downhill for the next hour or so. Unsurprisingly, the Ais Gill Distant signal had a nickname amongst the railwaymen who worked over the Settle and Carlisle. It was known as "The Star of Bethlehem".

As we journey through Advent and Christmas towards Epiphany in these confusing and uncertain times, perhaps we can fix our metaphorical gaze on the Star of Bethlehem; the assurance that God is in charge; that He will guide us to where we need to be and that he still calls each one of us to worship His Son Jesus Christ.



Harvest Appeal Thank You

Dear Friends at St Nicholas and St Paul's,
On behalf of everyone at Padley, I would like to thank you for your kind Harvest gift donation of Food.



This contribution is invaluable in enabling us to continue delivering services to the most vulnerable in our society. This donation will be used to support the delivery of our Day Centre, the only Day Centre in Derby providing:
somewhere warm, dry and safe for vulnerable men and women; to use WC; have a shower; get a nutritious cheap (free if they have no income) meal; get a change of clothes or wash their own clothes; access a dentist; a podiatrist; a hairdresser; a CPN; potential housing providers; access drug and alcohol services and when ready; obtain the support needed to make positive life changes.

We continue to redistribute food to other food banks supporting the Covid response and provide items from our stores to the Central Hub. In addition, we have supported Women's hostels and refuges with sanitary products and animal sanctuaries with pet food.

Without your kind generosity our services would be sadly depleted, with it you enable significant change to be achieved in the lives of people in genuine need.

With the kindest of regards and many thanks,
Regards

Sharon Bestwick
Administrator

Newsletter Information - Deadline!

Please be aware that the deadline for any news you'd like to be included in the next Newsletter is always the 16th of the month before.

Any info should be sent to the church office on stnicksalleestree@outlook.com

Birthdays

If you've got a big birthday coming up, maybe 80, 90..... 100?! We'd love to know so that we can celebrate with you!

Speak to Christine Cleminson, as she keeps our birthday records up to date.

Update from the Partington Family

I am excited to announce that our family have returned from the Little Red Dot of Singapore to beautiful Derbyshire. We have been on an international placement in Singapore since 2018, we were placed out there with Rolls Royce where my husband headed up the fan blade facility for the Singapore Asia region.

We have returned to England at a beautiful time of year to enjoy Autumn weather and its been pure joy to walk in the local parks and wear Wellington boots, jump in puddles and crunch leaves under our feet. Breathing in fresh air and wrapping up in scarves and hats has been a blissful comparison to the humidity and constant hot climate of Singapore. However I am not complaining about 365 days a year of sunshine!

So you may be wondering what life was like as an expat in Singapore, well apart from playing tennis, sipping the occasional G&T and sampling the local food I have kept myself busy. Singapore is a beautiful country with many buildings representing colonial ambiance, such as Raffles and stunning coloured shophouses. Alongside enjoying exploring the city I joined the Girl Guiding group at my children's school and went from a weekly volunteer too running my own Rainbows unit for 18, 5-7 year olds which was great fun and kept me very busy. As a family we have experienced some wonderful holidays to Australia, Malaysia, Thailand and Bali. It was a fantastic time to be based in Asia to explore the region and for our children to meet and experience such varied and diverse cultures. An international school has given them the chance to make friends with children from all over the world and to learn Mandarin along the way.

I have been lucky to have had the opportunity to press the pause button on life for a while and to enjoy my family and my children in a way I never would have been able to do if we had stayed in England. If we hadn't been brave as a family and said yes



to this opportunity and moved 10,000 miles away from all we know and love. I am grateful for the precious time I have had to be on an adventure with my children.

However, alongside all the good there were also many dark days. I missed my family very much, I am sure those of you who have family living abroad will understand what this feels like, to not physically be able to see people, to touch them, to laugh with them, to hold them, to be with them was so very hard. In these current times I think we can all empathise with how that feels.

My faith during this time was my warmest companion, my constant friend and my endless listener. I spoke at St Nick's many years ago about my life as a Christian, I spoke about how Jesus has always placed people in my life at just the right time to remind me of his love and show me that no matter where I am he's has not forgotten me. I met many wonderful people one of whom was a Christian, we connected on social media as a new expats in Singapore and from the moment we met I knew we had a connection and that turned out to be a shared love of Jesus. It was the most wonderful blessing to have her in my life and we shared so many special times together. We prayed together and encouraged each other in our journey with Christ. Expat life throws you with people from all walks of life and I was able to share my faith in many varied ways.

Singapore is such a diverse country where many faiths come together. It's a melting pot of cultures and it was wonderful to meet friends from all faiths and be united in a shared experience of living away from home and having a shared faith is an amazing way to be connected.

It is a wonderful feeling to be back in Derby and I look forward to returning to St Nicks church and seeing our church family again, especially for the children to return to the young church. Thank you for all your prayers and support during our time away.

I hope you're all keeping safe and healthy.
Lucy Partington

Blue Christmas Tree

This year we are acutely aware that Christmas will be a particularly painful one for many, as we have seen 2020 marked by a pandemic that has claimed lives of loved ones, or made seeing those we love nearing the end of life incredibly difficult. St Nick's have kindly been given a huge 12 foot Christmas tree, which was donated by one of our lovely hall hirers. We will be decorating this in a blue theme and be providing foiled gold hearts to hang in memory of those we will miss dearly this Christmas time.

With churches still open for private prayer, from the 1st December our tree will be up in the main church, which will be open for all to come in and quietly observe or hang an ornament upon.

Church will be open 10-12pm and 1-3pm on
Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

**Please follow latest government guidance regarding places of worship, which is subject to change, and observe social distancing and good hand hygiene.*



St Paul's Volunteer Help Required

Following on from the Annual meeting that was held in October, some key volunteer roles have become vacant. We are seeking people who can get involved in supporting the mission and helping grow the vision of St Paul's in future months and years ahead.



First of all there are 2 PCC vacancies one of which is the Parish Safeguarding Lead. If you're concerned about vulnerable adults and caring for children, if you've got administration skills and have some safeguarding experience in other contexts please do get in touch.

Secondly we are looking for some volunteer help with maintaining our webpages, there are some helpful 'how to' videos made by our previous webmaster which we can share with you.

We're also looking for someone who has experience of using sound and AV systems, so when we do go back in our church building we can continue to use these in our worship together. This would require you to be present on a Sunday morning to set up the equipment as well as running the software to project the words.

You may have noticed too that we've said goodbye to our lovely newsletter editor, who after 20 years has retired and is moving to new pastures. As well as editing, you would need to be able to contribute articles yourself and encourage others to do so. This is a key part of communications for our church and it would be helpful if you could also link into our social media account on Facebook. Both a printed version and online digital version of the newsletter would be required.

Finally if you've got any experience of looking after older buildings, perhaps professional skills such as a surveyor, we'd love to have you join our Building's committee.

If you can help or can suggest folks who might be amenable to sharing their skills and gifts in these areas, please talk to Jan or Mike the Church Wardens or get in touch with a member of clergy.

Sad News

The funeral of the late Freda Sutton, a well known member of St Nick's, sister to Beryl, took place on Monday 16th November at 2pm. Sadly numbers were restricted to 30 for the funeral service inside the building, but we were able (with the permission of Freda's family) to live stream the funeral on our Facebook page. Freda in fact attended even-song at St Nick's before it was consecrated!





Quarndon Christmas Light Trail 2020

Date: Friday 18th to Sunday 20th December 2020

Villagers are invited to create their own unique Christmas display as part of the Christmas trail.

You may wish to choose a Christmas film and add your interpretation of your chosen film to your front garden, driveway or windowsill.

It is free to enter and you need to register by Friday 11th December 2020 so the trail can be advertised.

To register please email the title of your display, name/organisation and where it will be to quarndonchristmastrail@outlook.com.

The displays need to be in place by midday on Friday 18th December. The winner will be announced at 6pm on Sunday 20th December.

To enjoy the display please ensure you wear appropriate footwear, high visibility clothing and carry a torch.

Upcoming Services

Dates/Services	Leaders	Readings
Sunday 6th December 10am Zoom Informal Worship	Becky	Isaiah 40.1-11 Mark 1.1-8
Sunday 13th December Pre-recorded Service, Informal Worship	Phil	Thessalonians 5.16-24 John 1:6-8, 19-28
Sunday 20th December 10am Zoom Informal Worship	Dawn	Luke 1:46b-55 Luke 1.26-38
Christmas Eve Pre-recorded Christmas Story Service 11.30pm Midnight Communion	Anna Dawn	Isaiah 9: 2-7 Luke 2:1-20
Christmas Day St Nick's 10am Communion Service St Paul's 10am Communion Service	Becky Dawn	Isaiah 52:7-10 John 1:1-14
Sunday 27th December Pre-recorded Service, Informal Worship	Phil	Isaiah 61.10-62.3 Luke 2.22-40

Please bear with us as we navigate COVID times and may have to change service plans at short notice. We will keep contact with you and let you know if plans change.

Handy Contacts for both churches:

St Nick's

Church Warden: Paul Taylor **Contact:** 01332 556020

Safeguarding Lead: Miriam Chappell **Contact:** 01332 550782

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stnicksallestree

St Paul's

Church Wardens: Mike Annable **Contact:** mike@stpaulsquarndon.org.uk

Jan Calladine **Contact:** jan@stpaulsquarndon.org.uk

Verger: Dawn Price **Contact:** 01332 556422

Safeguarding Link: Alison MacGregor **Contact:** 07752581043

Church Hall Bookings: Pat Glover **Contact:** 07780 830371
quarndonchall@aol.co.uk

(or see our website to book online)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stpaulsquarndon

Please get in touch if you'd like to talk to us about organising a Baptism at St Nick's or St Paul's, or would like to get married or celebrate a special anniversary with the renewal of wedding vows. Vicar Becky is always happy to respond to enquiries.