



Ansley Church News

No. 703

JANUARY 1984

Price 10p

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WORSHIP ?

1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays

11.00 a.m. Parish Communion.

6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer.

3rd Sunday

11.00 a.m. Family Worship.

6.30 p.m. Holy Communion.

Holy Communion also on 1st Sunday at 8.00 a.m.

St. John's Hall—Family Worship at 10.00 a.m., 29th January.

CHILDREN ?

Sunday School starts on Sunday, 8th January at 11.00 a.m., in the Village Church Hall except for the 3rd Sunday when it joins the Family Service. Family Service on 15th January.

TRANSPORT ?

A bus runs for the evening service. Leaves Ansley Corner at 6.00 p.m., picks up through the village, leaves Ansley Common at 6.10 p.m., and Birchley Heath at 6.15 p.m.

WHAT NOW ?

A glance at radio and TV programmes for the new year shows considerable interest in the future. Secular prophets abound, some forecasting gloom and doom, others a bright future for Britain. 1984 brings with it memories of George Orwell's famous book of that title (written in 1948). He saw a monstrous society of lies, manipulation, fear and urban squalor, all under the eye of the mythical "Big Brother." A grey world indeed.

Mercifully we have been spared the worst nightmares of Orwell's vision. Yet there is cause for concern. Our freedoms have been narrowed over the years; our ability to think for ourselves is dulled by the huge increase in pre-packed simplified opinions brought to us ready made from the "telly." It is said that we are a secular society from which spiritual values have been excluded. Yet why were there 200 people to our Christmas Carol Service and 130 to Christmas Eve Midnight Communion ? Is this just a desire to hang on to familiar traditions in an insecure world, or does it mean something more ? When it came to threatening the village school with closure, why was it that its most valued feature was its status as a Church School, with its standards based on Christian values ?

It would be possible to dismiss the Christmas highlight of the year and the feeling about our village school as mere remnants of folk religion, of no value in today's technical and scientific world. But for the Church to dismiss the depth of human feeling about such issues is a dangerous step, a withdrawal from the community and the world in which God chooses to involve himself.

What ought we to look forward to this year ? First, we ought to increase our UNDERSTANDING of the Christian faith. If we just take it for granted that "God so loved the world that he sent his Son . . ." (John 3:16) then we are denying the truth of Christmas. I hope that this Christmas wasn't just an annual festival but a time when you and I renewed our faith. Paul prayed for the Christians at Colossae, that they would have "... all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2.2-3). On Thursdays at the vicarage we will be holding a short Bible Study/discussion/questions/chat/coffee evening, beginning at 7.30 p.m. ANYONE is welcome to this ! Let us for 1984 increase our understanding of our Christian faith. First meeting, Thursday, 19th January.

Secondly we ought to increase our PRACTICE of the Christian faith. Our worship is quite lively but the more there are the better it is. I know of churches that have started off with six people at worship and ended up with 300 ! There are two full worship services each Sunday at St. Lawrence, plus once a

month at St. John's Hall. Both parson, and people have a better time of it when there are more people in Church. We're there to welcome you **inside** not to defend ourselves from those **outside** !

Lastly, we ought to be **POSITIVE**. The Church of England has become expert over the past few years at setting up committees to study this, that and the other, which produce endless talk and regrettably little impact. Jesus didn't do it this way. If Jesus had gone about saying how terrible the world is and how hard it all was then he would have had failure built in from square one. And that's often what's been happening in the Church. An observer recently said "in some Churches a casual visitor gets the impression from the mournful atmosphere of the service that the congregation must be rehearsing their own funerals !" Christians have been guilty of regarding themselves as God's abandoned waifs and orphans. **NO**—we are his adopted children, in a growing family ! Being positive depends on believing the promises of God, and working them out in the situation that God has already placed us—Ansley, 1984.

Best wishes and God's blessings to you and your family
for 1984, from the Vicarage,

TIM, JANE, REBECCA and DAVID.

WINIFRED MAY VEASEY

A sad event in December was the death of "Winnie" at the age of 79. Miss Veasey had been part of village life since the First World War, when she took part in services at St. John's Church. She subsequently became organist at the Parish Church in succession to Mr. Riley Brown in the 1930's and remained so until illness made it impossible for her to continue a few years ago. Many in our village will remember her as a schoolteacher at Church End School and Stockingford, and her years as choir leader at the Parish Church.

Miss Veasey's last few years were clouded by ill-health and depression, but until a few weeks before her death she was able to make her communion at Ansley. We extend our prayers and thoughts to those who will miss her most.

PANTOMIME

The children's pantomime and 'happening' in the Church Hall was a success, despite some misgivings at the early rehearsals as to whether things would actually happen right on the evening itself. Over 70 people watched a cast of 30 perform a nativity play and a sketch, "Listen to the peace and goodwill."

Music was provided by Alison McDonald and Sharon McParland and a more electronic variety by Paul Smith and Stephen Dexter. A very special thank you to all who took part and all who organised, coerced and arm-twisted the performers. What can we do next year ? Next Spring ? ?

The Carol Service in Church was well attended and a generous cash collection of £75 will be donated to the Church of England Children's Society. The Sunday School also sang carols round the village and raised a further £15.60 towards this worthy cause.

There will be a meeting of the Parochial Church Council on Wednesday, 11th January at 8.00 p.m., in St. John's Hall.

ANSLEY COMMON NEWS

The next service in St. John's Hall will be on Sunday, 29th January at 10.00 a.m. In future these services will be held on the LAST Sunday in the month rather than the fourth Sunday. It will be easier for you to remember when it takes place ! We hope to have the new lighting in operation in this Hall by the middle of January following a complete rewiring of the premises.

The Ansley Common Luncheon Club were entertained by children from Nursery Hill School on 21st December; there were Carols and Christmas readings. Numbers are well up in this club which is flourishing. Thank you to Mrs. Quick of Ansley Common and to all her helpers for making this a possibility and to Mrs. Freeman who has had to cease work there for family reasons.

CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL

1984 is the year in which our Church Electoral Roll is completely scrapped and a new one made up. In order to do this all Church members must fill in an application form before 29th February, obtainable from the Church or the Vicarage.

THANK YOU

Donations to the Church in memory of Mr. Joe Martin realised £73 and a collection in memory of Miss Veasey realised £86. A rummage sale in aid of Church Hall Funds on 1st December raised £30. The Pantomime raised £10 for the Church Hall and £6 for the Sunday School.

Mrs. Betty Parsley would like to thank all those who contributed to her presentation on her retirement at the end of November and who helped to make the occasion a memorable one.

THOUGHTS

"Too many Christians and Church Leaders prefer to be keepers of the aquarium rather than fishers of men." — Anon.

"First I tell them what I am going to tell them. Next, I tell them what I have to tell them. Thirdly, I tell them what I told them !" — Anon. Definition of preaching.

"Instead of being lights shining out to the world, we have become more like gas-rings talking inwardly among ourselves and generating considerable heat within our own Christian ghettos, but allowing very little of God's fire to reach the world around us."

Tom Walker, Rector of St. John's Harborne, Birmingham.

FUNERAL

December 8—Winifred May Veasey, aged 79; late of Well Cottages, Ansley.