

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

Parish including Birchley Heath, Ansley Common,
Ansley Village, Church End

No. 883

JANUARY 1999

Price 25p



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JANUARY NEWSLETTER 1999

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Dear Friends,

Have you made a New Year's resolution? Or have you given up the idea of resolutions altogether, on the grounds that they usually sink without trace by February! Sometimes it is hard to persist, even with things we know are a good idea.

It may seem odd still to be thinking about Christmas in January, but this is the month when we remember the Wise Men who travelled from the east (probably modern Iran), following the star that would lead them to Jesus, the Son of God. They set off, full of good intentions, but not really knowing what to expect.

The journey can't have been easy in the conditions of the time, but they were so sure of their quest that they persisted. They did get it wrong—they went to Herod's palace, which is understandable when they were looking for a new king. They were looking in the wrong place, but the star re-appeared and guided them to what was probably a simple house where Mary and Joseph were living by then.

Even though they had taken a wrong turning with Herod, by the time they got to Jesus they recognised him when they found him, and were filled with joy. At the start of this new year, maybe you feel at times that you have taken a wrong turning in your life. Be sure that God can use even the wrong turnings to lead us to Himself. When we know his presence in our lives, we too can experience the same joy as the wise men.

Joy may seem very far away if you have recently lost someone you love. For this reason we are again holding a **Memorial Service** at the end of the month. Whether your loss is some time ago or more recent, you are welcome to come along on **Sunday, 31st January at 6.30 p.m. at St. Laurence**, to ask for God's comfort and peace, and to light a candle in their memory.

May God bless you this year,
Gill and Geoff.

SERVICES FOR JANUARY

Theme for the month: People who saw Jesus

The services at St. Laurence are at 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

January 3rd: a.m. Family Service

p.m. Traditional Holy Communion

January 10th: a.m. Holy Communion

p.m. Traditional Evensong

January 17th: a.m. Morning Prayer

p.m. Holy Communion

January 24th: a.m. Holy Communion

p.m. Traditional Evensong

January 31st: a.m. Informal service on the theme of 'sight'

6.30 p.m. 'Light a Candle': Annual Memorial Service for those who have been bereaved. Guest Speaker: Rev. Edward Pogmore, Chaplain, George Eliot Hospital.

AT ST. JOHN'S HALL, ANSLEY COMMON

Services are usually at 10.15 a.m. twice a month: **HOWEVER** this month we are hoping to have a new floor put in, so the hall is not available. Normal services will be resumed as soon as possible! Meanwhile, you are welcome to use the taxi service and join in worship at St. Laurence.

St. John's monthly Communion will be held instead at St. Laurence on Tuesday, 5th January at 9.30 a.m., followed by home Communions.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday, 13th January at 2.00 p.m.: Join us in **Prayer for the church and parish** at 10 Nuthurst Crescent. If there is anyone you would like us to remember in prayer, please let Gill know.

'Vision' Fellowship group starts again on the 13th.

The after-Alpha group has re-named itself 'Stepping Stones' — re-starting on the 20th. Venues to be announced.

Monday, 18th January begins the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Tuesday, 19th January 9.30 a.m.: Shorter Morning Prayer in the church hall, followed by Senior Citizens.

Monday, 25th January 7.30 p.m.: St. John's Hall Committee.

Friday, 29th January 7.45 p.m.: the Weddington St. James' Church Concert Party will be holding a concert at Ansley Social Club. Proceeds for the church hall fund. Tickets £2.50.

Details from Margaret Kimberley 01203 384680. All welcome!

LOOKING AHEAD

Monday, 1st February 7.30 p.m.: Ansley Church Hall Committee.
Friday and Saturday, 5th and 6th February: Rev. John Law is holding a sequel to his very enjoyable 'Walk through the Bible' presentation in Fillongley. This time it's 'Walk through the New Testament.' Learn and remember Bible events in a way you would not dream of! Fun and informative. Details from John on 01676 540320.

THANK YOU to all those who supported our Christmas Evening. A good time was had by all, and raised a grand total of £992.43. Many thanks to Margaret Kimberley and her talented team for their hard work in organising the event.

THOU ART GOD by David Adam

Thou art the peace of all things calm,
Thou art the place to hide from harm,
Thou art the light that shines in dark,
Thou art the heart's eternal spark.
Thou art the door that's open wide,
Thou art the guest who waits inside.
Thou art the stranger at the door,
Thou art the calling of the poor,
Thou art my Lord and with me still,
Thou art my love, keep me from ill,
Thou art the light, the truth, the way,
Thou art my Saviour this very day.

Answers to the Trivia Quiz:

1. 57 = Heinz Varieties.
2. 999 = One less than a thousand.
3. 7 = Dwarfs in Snow White.
4. 39 = Books in the Old Testament.
5. 1 = Top of the Pops.
6. 8 = Henry (Kings of England).
7. 40 = Days and nights of the Great Flood.
8. 100 = Years War.
9. 7 = Days in the week.
10. 6 = George (Kings of England).
11. 13 = Unlucky for some.
12. 52 = Weeks in the year.

EDITORIAL

1st January, 1999

It seems like yesterday we were welcoming in 1998 and here we are at 1999. The Millennium looms ever nearer.

The weather was strange in 1998 and during December it hardly seemed to get light all day. The birds were waiting every day to be fed and I have never seen so many pheasants.

January always seems to be an anti-climax after all the rush of Christmas, but we need this lull to give our stomachs a chance to settle and also to get everything back to normal. The parties are over, the presents are accepted and the food cupboards and freezers are depleted, but after Christmas we have passed the shortest day and we can see the nights drawing out. It seems a shame that after all the preparation, spending, worry and anticipation, just a couple of days and we are back to earth with a bump. Of course the trimmings and Christmas trees are still there until 12th Night but nowadays some disappear very quickly after Christmas as they have been up so long.

Some years ago, as soon as Christmas was over many were looking forward to the 'January Sales.' Some people, men and women, would see something advertised, perhaps a washing machine or a 3-piece suite at a ridiculous price, and they would either sleep overnight outside the store (usually J. C. Smiths (now Debenhams), the Co-op. or one of the big furniture stores), or they would get up very very early and queue because it was 'first come, first served.' They were genuine bargains and you could understand someone on a low income thinking it worth waiting in the cold to buy a large item they could not otherwise afford. I have never done this, but I have been to the January Sales in my teens and it was such fun but also very serious as hordes of people struggled and pushed to get the best bargains. I don't think I ever managed to buy much as my sisters and I were too busy laughing in the crush to take it seriously.

As I look out at the bare trees at this time of year, the Winter Jasmin is a blaze of colour and even the Primulas are trying hard to flower, they seem to be signs of new birth, new hope and life heralding the coming year. May you all have lots of love, good health and God's presence with you in 1999 and always.

Marie Cove.