

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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JANUARY 2000

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JESUS 2000



IT'S HIS MILLENNIUM!

*Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today
and for ever.*

YOU ARE WELCOME TO OUR CELEBRATIONS

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JANUARY 2000

Dear Friends,

We've talked about it, we've thought about it, we've worried about the Bugs, and we've complained about the Dome. The media have had a field day, and some of us are sick of it. But it's finally happened—the Millennium is here.

Does it mean anything? The pessimists would say No—it's only another date and time. Life will go on as normal—let's keep our feet on the ground! Optimists would say: Don't be such a spoilsport. It's time for new hope and a new start.

Christians are both optimistic and pessimistic. We are pessimistic about human nature. We know that we are all born with the sort of nature which makes it easier to do wrong than to do right: what we call sin. Sin has been in us since time began, however many millennia ago that was. A new millennium is not going to change that. People will still do wrong, there will still be wars, famine, fear and grief. Not much to look forward to.

But Christians have a real hope. We are optimistic about God. We know he has already done something about sin, by sending his Son Jesus to be our Saviour. We know that, silently, he is working his purpose out through all the trouble of the world. And we know that, one day, when Jesus comes back, he will put everything right.

When I was a child I remember working out how old I would be in the year 2000. I couldn't imagine what it would be like to be so ancient! But for some reason, I also thought that maybe Jesus would come back in 2000.

The Bible tells us that nobody knows when Jesus will return. But supposing he did? Would you be ready? Would I?

If we knew Jesus was coming back soon, what would we change about our lives? He's only looking for one thing—people who believe in him and worship him, who trust him, who live their lives for him. It's the only way to be ready, and we need to be ready all the time.

Ask him into your life, and make him the centre of what you do. Then the Millennium will truly be a new start for you, and you will be able to look forward with hope.

In His love,
Gill and Geoff.

SERVICES FOR JANUARY Theme: Growth

Services at St. John's Hall will be on 9th and 23rd January, at 10.15 a.m.

Services at St. Laurence's are at 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

January 1st: Bells ring at midday, followed by short service with Roman Catholic friends at the church, Refreshments to follow.

January 2—a.m. Family Service,
p.m. Traditional Holy Communion.

January 9—a.m. Holy Communion,
p.m. Traditional Evening Prayer.

January 16—a.m. Morning Prayer,
p.m. Holy Communion.

January 23—a.m. Holy Communion,
p.m. Traditional Evening Prayer.

January 30—a.m. Worship for all ages.
p.m. **Annual Memorial Service for those wishing to remember a loved one, with Rev. Celia Adams, Assistant Chaplain, George Eliot Hospital.**

Mid-week: January 4th at St. John's: 9.30 a.m. Morning Prayer led by Dave Cove.

January 18th at Village Church Hall: 9.30 a.m. Shorter Morning Prayer.

January events:

Monday 10th at 7.00 p.m.: Links Children's Club starts again, weekly.

Thursday 13th at 7.45 p.m. at St. John's: P.C.C.

Pastoral Visitors' Training:

Wednesday 19th at 7.30 p.m. in St. Wilfrid's Church Room, Old Arley: Listening Skills, with Mary Morris, a Christian Counsellor working in Nuneaton.

Wednesday 26th at 2.00 p.m.: Intercessors meet at 10 Nuthurst Crescent.

Wednesday 26th at 7.30 p.m. in St. Wilfrid's: Visiting the bereaved, with Rev. Mick Vincent, Vicar of St. Paul's, Stockingford and former chairman of CRUSE for this area.

Once more it is my pleasure to thank the very many people who worked so hard to make our Christmas events enjoyable and successful. The church was beautifully decorated to welcome Christmas congregations and Archdeacon Ian Russell for the Midnight service.

Thanks also go to Margaret Kimberley, who for many years has given freely of her time and talents to decorate the church for weddings. Margaret has now decided to take a well-earned retirement from this responsibility. One thing we may be sure of: I doubt if she will be putting her feet up! Another lady retiring this year is May Stain, who has worked hard in producing preserves to sell for church events for a long time. Thank you, May—it has been appreciated.

From the Registers:

Our prayers and sympathy go to the family of Kathleen Hughes, aged 78 from 64 Birmingham Road.

Also to David and Gill Morley on the loss of David's mother, Meg, at the age of 91, who lived for many years at Hood Lane Farm and was a staunch member of St. Laurence's.

Also to the family of Eric Osborn, from 103 St. Laurence Road, who died at the age of 79.

NEWS AND NOTES

Our thanks to the relatives of Mrs. Hughes, who have kindly donated flower vases and other items to the church.

Congratulations to Malcolm Sutton on his 65th birthday, and thanks to him for all he does for the community in his capacity as Parish Council chairman.

Thank you to the Links club children—and their leaders—for their enthusiasm and hard work in preparing the sketch at Jesus' Birthday Party. Kate Winslet had better look to her laurels.

The Christmas Fun Evening was once more a very enjoyable time. The stalls were full of goodies, many of them home or hand-made; but it was the Lucky Dip that attracted attention! We pitted our wits against the games and especially Margaret Oliver's infamously difficult ring and buzzer. The mince pies disappeared very quickly, and then Geoff drew attention to Jesus, the true meaning of Christmas, as we sang carols. The evening was organised with skill and flair—thanks to all those who contributed in any way. Together with Margaret Antill's wreaths, the evening raised a tremendous total of £1007.

Many thanks to all those who braved ice and sleet to give out leaflets!

PASTORAL VISITORS

Although I visit as much as I can, for some time now I have been concerned that I am unable to do so as frequently as I would like. It is a very important service to the community, and so we have decided as a church to try and meet this need together.

Accordingly, the PCC has asked certain church members to consider becoming part of a pastoral visiting team, so that we can share this responsibility more widely and provide a better service to people.

I have now organised a short training course for those who are considering becoming pastoral visitors. You will have noticed the details of the first two sessions; one on listening skills and one on visiting the bereaved. In February we will welcome Rev. Howard Gordon, a member of the George Eliot chaplaincy team, to speak on visiting those who are ill or depressed. Finally, Geoff and I will lead a session on pastoral care and confidentiality.

Although this training is organised with the pastoral visitors in mind, each session is open to anyone who would like to learn more. They will all be held in St. Wilfrid's church room, Old Arley, as the Ansley halls are not available that night.

Thank you to the Wednesday Fellowship for giving up their evening.

Gill Kimber.

Ansley Village Senior Youth Club

Help needed to work with young people aged between 14-19 years. One evening per week for two hours. If interested contact Joyce Allton on 01827 713016 or Heather De Meda on 01203 393625.

EDITORIAL

January 2000

This is January, loved by few. But still buds are peeping, green and new. Spring will be here before we know, and soon forgotten the ice and snow.

It seems strange having to write a letter in December 1999 for January 2000, but the printer needs this early due to the holiday. But we can look back on 1999 and when we do it has been an unusual year with many natural but devastating disasters, as well as man-made ones. There has, however, been an agreement made in Northern Ireland, which, if all goes well, could be one of the most momentous in our lives. The people there must be holding their breath and praying with all their might that now at last they can live normal lives, so let us add our prayers to theirs at this very special time.

For some older people the last few decades have seen so many changes as they remember sitting round a table at meal times instead of balancing a tray in front of the T.V., it was safe for children to walk to school instead of cars and buses; listening to radio, telling stories, looking for pictures in the fire, instead of glued to T.V's and computers; children shared bedrooms and had great fun (sometimes 4 or 5 in a room), whereas now each child has it's own space; even the seasons were predictable but now we have flowers blooming in December. Older people remember the 'good old days' and regret their passing, but young people of today will probably look back on the 90's with all it's technological wonders, pop stars and football heroes, as their 'good old days,' as with youth comes all the zest and energy for life and these are the days we all remember and mostly the good times, not the bad.

As the year 2000 dawns, it seems that we always look back and remember and we also look forward but we never seem to have the time to enjoy the present. People have been talking about and preparing for the millennium and have completely lost sight of the year 1999. The older people think of their past memories and everyone looks forward to special events such as the birth of babies, weddings, special anniversaries, but in looking back and looking forward we fail to enjoy the present. I love the line from a poem "What is this life if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare." It seems this is how life is today, the present is so busy and we are so taken up with the past and future, we forget about 'now.' So let us make every day count, whether we are at work, in the house, taking children to school or housebound, let us make a resolution that every day in the year 2000 will be used and remembered. After all, Jesus filled his days on earth with so much and at times He was exhausted like us, but He knew He only had a short time, so that time was precious.

God Bless

Marie Cove